

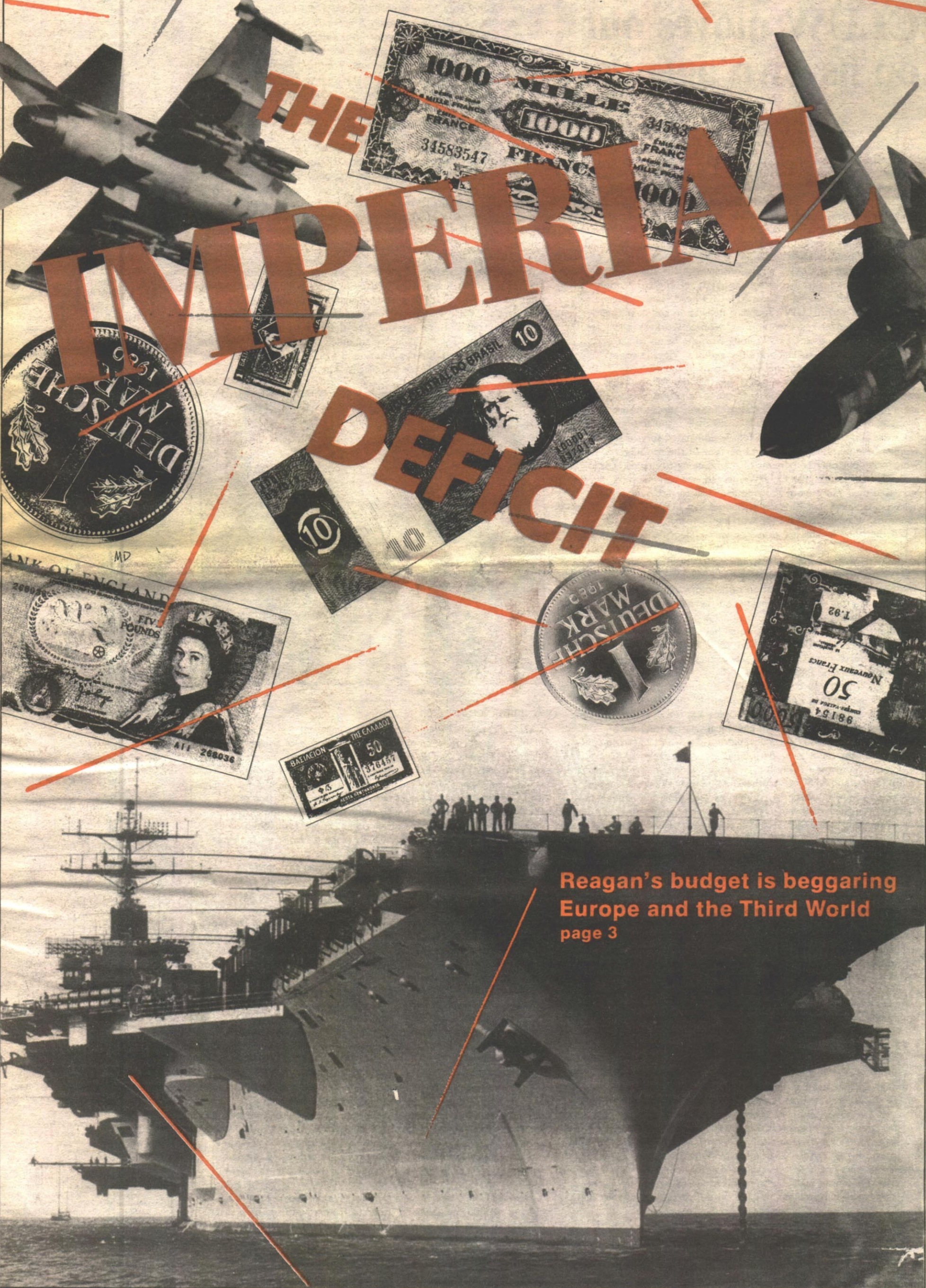
IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 8, NO. 18

APRIL 4-10, 1984

\$1.25

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THE STORY

CLUW moves out on its own agenda

By Joan Walsh

CHICAGO

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) President William Wynn was full of praise for the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) at its 10th anniversary convention here March 22-25. Recounting the hard work and intelligence of his union's women members, he noted that one woman UFCW executive was recently promoted to replace two men. Laughter and applause greeted Wynn's anecdote, and then several friendly shouts: "Did you pay her both salaries?"

That may sum up CLUW's relationship with the still male-dominated labor leadership as well as anything. The convention was full of symbolism: where it took AFL-CIO head George Meany a year to meet with CLUW's founding delegation and hear their demands for better representation of women workers, this year Lane Kirkland came to CLUW, along with the heads of six international unions, to celebrate the group's "decade of progress" and to commit themselves to its agenda.

The parade of male leaders was a sign that the AFL-CIO has come to accept CLUW's founding premise—that working women are a measure of organized labor's past failures and its future promise. With the decline of traditionally male manufacturing industries and the growth of the female-dominated service sector, women have come to make up 43 percent of the nation's workforce, but only 16 percent of them belong to unions. Yet in the '70s, the decade that CLUW emerged, women unionists increased their ranks from about four million to just over seven million, a development Kirkland attributed to CLUW's efforts as the country's "leading advocate for working women."

But the labor luminaries' presence was evidence that CLUW has achieved another goal—while pressing the union hierarchy to open its ranks to women and address their concerns in the workplace, CLUW has managed to make clear its commitment to labor unity. The convention was a celebration of harmony, with union presidents praising the extent to which "our agendas have welded together," in the words of Professional and Technical Engineers president Rodney Bower. "You could have formed a negative, critical organization that would have contributed to the tearing apart of labor," noted United Steelworkers Acting President Lynn Williams, a convention delegate.

Instead, CLUW can count on AFL-CIO support for one of its earliest demands—pay equity for women. In the last several years unions have gone to the bargaining tables and the courts to force public and private employers to pay equal salaries for jobs of comparable worth and correct traditional disparities between sex-segregated jobs. That same period has seen an increasing number of unions—from the heavily female Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and AFSCME to the United Auto Workers—move working women's needs such as child care and maternity benefits high up on their bargaining agendas. Other triumphs the convention applauded include the appointment of two women—CLUW President Joyce Miller and American Federation of Government Employees' Barbara Hutchinson—to the AFL-CIO Executive Council. Gains in organizing mainly female office workers by SEIU 925 and AFSCME, among others, were noted as among the few encouraging sights on the gloomy labor landscape. And though progress has been slow, CLUW can take credit for the advancement of women within union executive boards and state councils.

National political trends also contributed to the optimism at this election-year convention. With the AFL-CIO committed to replacing Ronald Reagan with Walter Mondale in November, CLUW is its link to one of the Democrats' best assets—the gender gap. All the speakers noted women's clout this year, and CLUW's contribution to it—President Miller heads the Women's Roundtable, an organization of feminist leaders that launched the Women's Vote Project earlier this year and pledged to register 1.5 million new women voters.

"Thank God for Jesse."

Although CLUW itself is non-partisan, its members decidedly are not. They cheered as Joan Mondale outlined her husband's commitment to pay equity and childcare legislation, and as National Organization for Women (NOW) President Judy Goldsmith reaffirmed her organization's solidarity with labor's chosen candidate. But U.S. Rep. Charlie Hayes (D-Chicago), a former UFCW vice president, got a standing ovation from more than half the crowd when he said, "Thank God for Jesse Jackson—whether you agree with him or not, he's forced the party to deal with our issues." And although the delegates seemed overwhelmingly to favor Mondale, as the weekend passed an increasing number of black women and some whites donned Jackson buttons, to no apparent criticism or hostility.

That may symbolize CLUW's most remarkable attributes—its racial diversity and its tolerance of dissent. Perhaps 40 percent of

the 1,100 delegates and registered observers were minority women, a fact reflected in CLUW leadership. Those high levels in part reflect minority women's numbers in the unions where CLUW is strongest. But more important, notes CLUW founding coordinator Addie Wyatt, a black UFCW vice president and CLUW executive president, it is evidence of "a commitment we worked at—we're opposed to racism and sexism and we've worked hard to make sure our leadership reflects that." This year saw the election of four minority national officers: Wyatt, the Teamsters' Clara Day, AFSCME's Georgia McGhee and CLUW's first Hispanic officer, the Newspaper Guild's Anna Marie Padia.

Perhaps because harmony with its trade union brothers seemed so secure, CLUW took several policy stands at this convention that are at odds with AFL-CIO orthodoxy. A groundbreaking peace, jobs and disarmament resolution supported the nuclear freeze, which the AFL-CIO opposes, and called for the transfer of public funds from the military budget to social programs. Another resolution put CLUW on record as opposing U.S. intervention in Central America and military aid to El Salvador. AFL-CIO policy supports military aid tied to human rights improvements in that country.

The nuclear freeze stand promised to be controversial. It was preceded by a workshop on defense that featured SEIU Vice-President Rosemary Trump, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* editor Ruth Adams and representatives of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze and Jobs with Peace campaigns. "This was the first convention where discussion of these topics was made possible," noted Trump, who said previous attempts to introduce similar resolutions were ruled "inappropriate" to CLUW's four-point women's rights charter. She worried about turnout at the peace workshop, but she needn't have; it was standing room only, with listeners spilling out into the hallway.

Yet the freeze section of the peace resolution came close to being dropped. A substitute submitted by the resolutions committee omitted mention of the freeze campaign and merely urged CLUW members to work within their unions for redistribution of the military budget. But in a testimony to the group's internal democracy, an AFSCME delegate amended the proposed resolution to reinstate support for the freeze and a pledge to work with the freeze and Jobs With Peace campaigns. The motion carried with only two votes against it.



Lane Kirkland and Joyce Miller

A union gender gap?

CLUW President Miller downplays the apparent gender gap within union ranks. "The labor movement is reflective of society, so CLUW members may be more liberal than men on war and peace," she said. While she didn't oppose the organization's foreign policy stands, she wasn't wildly excited about their adoption either. "This isn't a left-right thing—I consider myself on the left. But there's some strain between those who want to deal with feminist issues vs. world issues. There are other organizations established to deal with world issues; CLUW is the only place to work on feminist issues [in labor]."

Most of the resolutions adopted stayed within that realm, supporting congressional childcare legislation, increasing CLUW's work on pay equity, demanding more affirmative action agreements in collective bargaining and calling on the labor movement to increase its efforts to organize women workers. Two of the more forward-looking resolutions demanded special attention to women workers in the currently male-dominated industrial policy discussions within the AFL-CIO and the Democratic Party, and called for a ban on computer homework. The latter is a special focus of the recently appointed CLUW High Technology task force, established to study both the hazards and potential benefits of the computer revolution in manufacturing, communications and the service sector. Of great concern is the potential for employers to shift that work to the home—or overseas (see this issue's back page)—to escape increasingly troublesome office workers' unions.

To CLUW co-founder and Recording Secretary Elinor Glenn, the convention's greatest significance was in showing the numbers of younger union members getting involved in the organization. She attributes it to the fact that CLUW is the only organization training women unionists "to fight for their issues and organize better and move up in their unions." CLUW education programs run the gamut from voice coaching to issues strategies, she said, "and they're helping this youth come in and play leadership roles."

Now CLUW's task is expanding its membership beyond the current 18,000 members, in order to have a resource base that will enable it to organize more effectively, Miller says. "It's a chicken and egg proposition: we'd like to have a paid staff organizer to work with the chapters, but we can't afford it without more members. We represent the interests of seven million working women. We should have at least a million members."



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IN THESE TIMES

By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

ONCE THERE WAS A FACTORY owner who was actually much more than just a boss. He was a spiritual leader, a moral mentor, a watchful father. His flock was his workers, a notoriously untidy lot who were always drinking and winding up in jail and were always in debt.

The factory owner was not a cruel man, but he knew not to be lenient. "You've got to learn the value of thrift and hard work," he would lecture his employees, who lived in squalid slums at the far end of town. "You've got to learn prudence. You shouldn't fight. You shouldn't spend more than you earn."

Then, majestically stretching a well-manicured hand out over his ragged, ill-fed audience, he would intone: "I, too, was once poor. But now I'm rich. You should learn from my example."

But an amazing thing soon happened. The workers sank deeper in debt, yet that was no surprise since debt was a constant in the slums, like dirty children and flooded streets. But, incredibly, the factory owner also began to spout red ink. His bank was in hock to other banks. His factory, once so up-to-date and powerful, was now becoming rundown and would sometimes close altogether for weeks on end. Even the old man's white suit, in the past so immaculate and gleaming that it was the wonder of the whole town, had become stained and frayed.

But still he kept lecturing. "You must cease your evil ways," he would tell his workers, a strange note of hysteria creeping into his voice. "You're irresponsible and lazy. You're like children who squander their allowance on candy. You're bums who would rather beg, steal and borrow than work. The factory owner's voice rose to a shout. "You'll never get out of debt...."

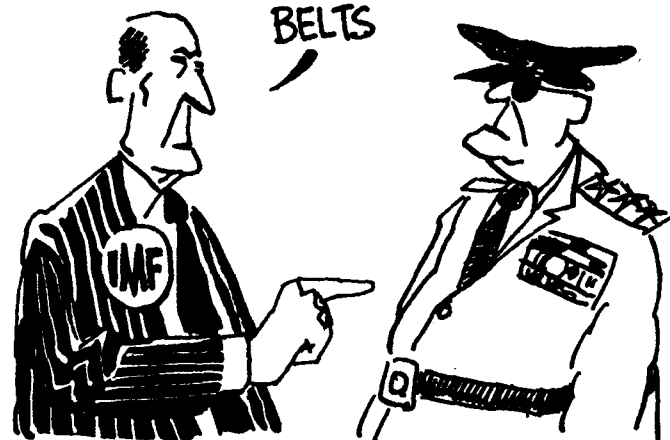
Ronald Reagan's economic prescription for the hungry '80s is actually fairly simple: free spending for the U.S., austerity for everyone else. In so many words, that was the message he brought before the annual world conference of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington last September. In the audience were elegant bankers from New York, London and Zurich and only slightly less sleek Third World finance ministers from places like Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Santiago, Chile.

Both groups radiated uneasiness, the bankers because they were undoubtedly trying to think up ways to explain to their investors and depositors why they had poured billions down financial sinkholes like Brazil and the Philippines; the finance ministers because they were wondering how much more austerity their countries could bear before the slums ringing their cities exploded in hunger riots and hostile demonstrations.

Reagan comes before this financially strapped group bearing good news and bad. Yes, he assured them, despite the hostility of the Republican right wing, his administration still supported the IMF's efforts to prevent Mexico's near-bankruptcy and other financial outbreaks from erupting into a global financial conflagration. And, yes, he went on, the White House would do all it could to persuade a recalcitrant Congress to vote additional credits for the Fund so it could make sure that bankers and Third World debtors kept going through the motions of loan "reschedulings" so that new loans would keep flowing to allow Third World debtors to pay the overdue interest on their old loans.

But then the mood soured when Reagan turned to the subject of the unprecedentedly huge U.S. budget deficits. America, he warned, was in no hurry to close its budget gap and curb its own propensity to borrow. The bitter message was couched in familiar supply-side rhetoric. "The deficit is coming down as a result of economic growth," Reagan declared, and "we will not risk sabotaging

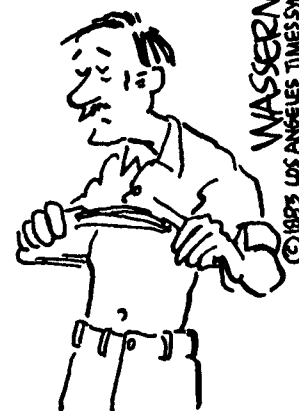
YOU BRAZILIANS HAVE TO TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS



THE IMF SAYS YOU HAVE TO TIGHTEN YOUR BELT



THE IMF SAYS YOU HAVE TO TIGHTEN YOUR BELT

WASSERMAN
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Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Free spending for the U.S.—austerity for everyone else

our economic expansion in a short-sighted attempt to reduce deficits by raising taxes."

He was also perfectly clear on the reasons behind the policy of spend, spend, borrow, borrow. The deficit, he said, "is caused in part by our determination to provide the military strength and political security to ensure peace in the world."

Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, the president's economic alter ego, was warning the IMF and its sister agency, the World Bank, to tighten up on Third World lending, including loans to the very poorest countries who traditionally rely on the bank for modest grants of long-term, interest-free credit. Borrowing in those countries had long ago outstripped earnings, Regan said, and he frankly informed both agencies that the U.S. would no longer subsidize a lending program that flew in the face of economic reason. It was the strange Reagan/Regan dialectic at work once again: fiscal discipline was for the poor, while the rich wallowed happily in a sea of red ink.

Coming apart at the seams.

That was six months ago. Since then, the Reagan administration's dream world has shown signs of coming apart. The deficit and its attendant horrors of high interest rates, an over-valued dollar and a mounting trade deficit have claimed victims everywhere. The optimism of the first stages of the economic recovery, which began in the fall of 1982, has given way to pessimism and hand-wringing. The stock market boom, which began in the summer of 1982, appears to have fizzled as the cost of borrowing has climbed. The dollar shows signs of slipping against other currencies, which could force interest rates even higher.

The conviction is becoming widespread that another recession is in the offing, perhaps as early as the end of this year. In February, Paul Volcker, the chairman of Federal Reserve, warned that the Reagan administration was "playing Russian roulette" with the economy. That caused Felix Rohatyn, the financial fixer behind the Big MAC bailout of New York City in 1975, to remark in the *New York Re-*

view of Books that "when you play Russian roulette, sooner or later there will be a live round in the chamber."

Meanwhile, in the latest issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, Sylvia Ostry was choosing a song from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* to express her own mounting anxiety over the direction of the American-led recovery:

*While shivering in my shoes
I strike a careless pose
and whistle a happy tune,
And no one ever knows
I'm afraid....*

Such fears are certainly justified, although the Russian roulette metaphor is a bit misleading, since in that game no harm is done until the gun actually goes off. In the budget deficit game, however, the economic wreckage has already been piling up for months (although the worst is undoubtedly yet to come).

In addition to a rapidly rising national debt, the chief impact of the deficit, now estimated at at least \$180 billion a year, is

on interest rates and the buying power of the dollar relative to other currencies. Both are driven relentlessly upward as the U.S. borrows heavily to paper over its yawning budget gap. Other societies have solved similar deficit problems by simply printing paper money, which drives the value of the currency down and sets off an inflationary spiral.

For Reagan, though, that particular avenue of escape is blocked by the independent Federal Reserve, whose prime mission since Volcker became chairman five years (and two recessions) ago has been combatting inflation and imposing discipline on the financial markets after the crazy excesses of the '70s. If Reagan is set on a borrowing binge, Volcker is set on making him pay a penalty in the form of higher and higher interest rates.

But the consequence is a collision no less damaging than the inflationary spiral. Interest rates serve as a valve to dampen or encourage economic activity. Lower them, and it becomes easier to open a pizzeria, to buy a new car or a house, or to invest in new factory equipment. Raise them, and economic growth diminishes and then is finally extinguished, like a flame deprived of oxygen. The effects of tightening credit and rising interest rates have been felt worldwide. In Western Europe, where fiscal austerity and cutbacks in public spending have been in effect for several years, governments have stood by helplessly while more and more badly needed capital flows into the U.S. Treasury in search of ever-higher rates of return. To compete, those governments have been forced to raise their own interest rates, resulting in a lingering economic malaise.

"Eurosclerosis" is the current term in vogue, and its chief symptoms are rising unemployment (nearly 11 percent at the end of last year, even after the wholesale expulsion of millions of foreign "guest workers") and rising protectionism. European trade wars have reached the level of intensity where the breakup of the European Common Market is threatened—a prospect that would have been considered far-fetched a decade ago but now

Continued on page 6

IN SHORT

La Raza Unida disbands

In Rio Arriba county they'd rather fight *and* switch. The 10-year-old New Mexico chapter of the La Raza Unida Party has recently relinquished its independent status to join forces with Jesse Jackson. The national La Raza Unida Party was formed in the early '70s to involve the disenfranchised Mexican-Americans in local Southwest politics.

Spokesman Antonio DeVargas cites opposition to Ronald Reagan and agreement with Jackson's stand on foreign and domestic policy as reasons for the change. He emphasized that the chapter isn't interested in becoming Democrat *per se*: "If it turns out the rainbow coalition doesn't become cohesive and doesn't outlast the convention, then we will consider reorganizing."

Caveat advertiser

President Reagan thought he was doing his conservative allies a favor last fall by suggesting that the U.S. pull out of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), but George Krolloff, head of a Washington-based communications consulting firm, sees it differently. According to Krolloff in a recent issue of *Advertising Age*, the move will "serve to weaken U.S. markets abroad" because the United Nations organization serves as the "prime pulpit for the Grand High Poobahs who preach against the sins of Western media and advertising." The communications mogul foresees a leftist conspiracy to control the flow of information—particularly advertising—in those Third World countries so integral to UNESCO and important for U.S. exports. And he cautions those who may be naive enough to think that anyone else will come to the U.S.'s aid in these dangerous times: "Global marketers, beware! Most Europeans are as strongly against U.S. products, advertising and media dominance as Brazil, India and the likes of Tanzania." While UNESCO hums along levying threats against the "market system" and the "trans-nationals," Krolloff argues that the U.S. will no longer be there with its "arm-twisting which has brought the industrialized nations into occasional lockstep with us in the crucial UNESCO forum."

White sight

While Krolloff rails against the possibility of tighter control on the media in Third World countries, the white-directed SABC-TV in South Africa is charging that the black-directed BOP-TV has too little control over its market. BOP was set up in Bophuthatswana, a state northeast of the Johannesburg SABC station, and was to direct its reruns of "Ironside" and "Rockford Files" at the Tswana people working in South Africa. But the programs were beamed to areas other than those agree upon in a BOP-SABC agreement—places where whites live. This "white spillage" is drawing viewers away from SABC and has caused the white-oriented station to try to block the transmissions. Meanwhile, white viewers who've felt the deleterious effects of apartheid are clamoring for SABC to allow them access to BOP's superior programming.

Trashed again

Intending to get at the root of their litter problem, St. Louis aldermen vote April 6 on a referendum that punishes people with fines from \$5 to \$500 for rooting through garbage cans and dumpsters. Home and business owners have complained that the "garbage people" leave litter strewn behind them as they search for the recyclable aluminum cans and bottles that add a few additional dollars to their livelihood. Claiming that they "need garbage to survive," a coalition of homeless representing the estimated 10,000 without shelter in that city have been busy protesting the proposed legislation. Apparently the city officials hadn't thought through the problem very thoroughly, though. Refuse commissioner Rick Yount claimed that "the whole concept was to control the trash and litter, not to penalize the indigents and poor people."

Presidential prognosis

While political analysts study a candidate's past record and ideological bent to find clues about how a politician will perform in office, science has found a better way. Not content to dabble in the art of fortune-telling, psychologist David Winters has constructed "motivation profiles" of the leading Democratic contenders. Working with material from speeches and press conferences, Winter categorizes politicians according to their love of power, desire to achieve and need to be liked (affiliation, in psychojargon). Winter nailed down Sen. Gary Hart as high in power and achievement motivation—a combination that closely resembles Ronald Reagan's profile. Power-motivated presidents have an assertive, energetic approach to the problems they face and consequently have a forceful impact on the country's policies. Unfortunately, these same traits often lead to contentious face-offs with other nations. Mondale was a hard man to categorize according to these measures—it seems he was deficient in all three. The best Winter could do was to describe Mondale as low-key in a Calvin Coolidge sort of way.

—Beth Maschinot



Charlton Heston wants to keep the actors and extras separate.

SAG says "no"

WASHINGTON—Two weeks ago, Screen Actors Guild (SAG) members decided by a small margin not to approve a merger with the Screen Extras Guild (SEG). The defeat of the merger highlights a long-contested question between SAG and SEG: what should a union be?

As usual, the actors are dramatizing problems that plague the entire union movement. On the one hand, management is increasingly diversified, with Coca-Cola owning Columbia Pictures and Gulf and Western owning Paramount. On the other hand, "the film industry" is no longer a separate arena from television programming and other video productions—cuts made for movies will at times make their way to television and vice versa. But a union like SAG was organized to combat only the film subsidiary of the corporation and only one type of media production. Because of this narrow organizing, entertainers who work in film, on the stage and in nightclubs may have to carry three or four union cards.

The merger with SEG, a small union many of whose members are also SAG members, seemed like an obvious step to strengthen the union in the face of diversified management. In fact, SAG is well down the road in merger negotiations with a much larger union, the American Federation

of Television and Radio Artists—a proposal that won the endorsement of the SAG national board by a whopping 70-1 margin.

But the issue of merging with extras quickly embroiled the members in an emotion-filled debate spearheaded by the Actors Working for an Actors Guild (AWAG). AWAG's original organizer and spokesperson is Charlton Heston, who has criticized SAG's President Ed Asner for "politicizing" SAG in the board decision to give a donation to striking PATCO workers and for opposing anti-union legislation.

AWAG's current president, Mark McIntire, described the merger as violating the integrity of the organization, which he thinks of as a guild rather than a union.

"We have nothing in common with extras," he told *In These Times*. "We are paid for what we create with our minds, our hearts and our souls. Extras are paid on how they look from the outside. They are paid as three-dimensional objects. Our training has nothing to do with that. We are not denigrating that work, but it's not our work."

In fact, AWAG had denigrated that work in an October 1982 mailing that included extras on a list of "undesirable human beings," following "stooges, McCarthyites, red-baiters, blacklists and scumbags."

AWAG arguments linked the issue of actors' pride in their art with a prevalent fear of "big labor," one of Charlton Heston's bugbears. Heston shares that at-

titude with many members of AWAG, which attracts older and more conservative members and now numbers in the hundreds. (SAG's membership is around 55,000.) SAG, according to Heston, does not need "big labor" as much as "big labor" needs the glamor of SAG's famous actors for its fundraisers and press conferences.

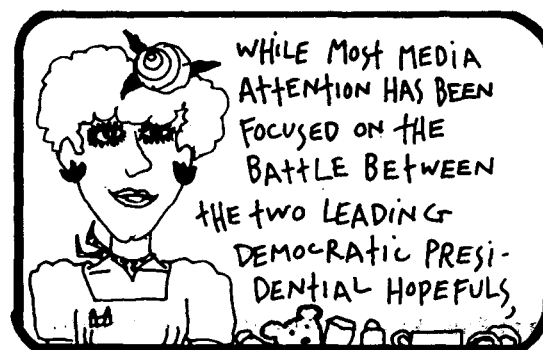
Many in AWAG also see their business as highly personal, and don't want to antagonize management. And others argue, with longtime board member Marie Windsor, that "merger isn't needed because if the stars don't go to work, production stops."

But to people like Ed Asner, these arguments reek of elitism and of an outmoded understanding of unionism. "Unionism means one for all and all for one," he said to *In These Times*. "We need more of that philosophy in the entertainment industry because we are continually annihilated, because it's so easy to break us up. I would relish a situation where all the above-the-line talent [from every medium] would be in one union. But getting there is another thing."

It sure is. After the merger was defeated this time, Asner criticized AWAG for using emotional appeals to defeat a sound measure that would have protected union interests. "We were frankly shocked," he said, "at how prominent the elitism issue remained, as if to prove our own status, we had to insist that extras were a 'lower class' instead of a related craft."

—Pat Aufderheide

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



Yale strike on hold

NEW HAVEN, CONN.—A battle that may determine the future of Yale's 10-month-old office workers' union neared a head last week.

The 1,850-member union—Local 34 of the Federation of University Employees—was set to strike after negotiations on its first contract with the university had made no real progress. But the Yale administration, which has hired the Chicago-based anti-union law firm of Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather and Geraldson, reversed course as the strike deadline approached. Local 34 postponed the deadline last Thursday, after a 14-hour nego-

tiating session ended at 4:00 a.m. Suddenly, key issues such as job security were on the table.

A gradual building of campus and community pressure apparently led Yale to negotiate. Area union activists—who saw last May's narrow election victory by Local 34 as a spark for organizing largely female workforces—condemned the university this winter in mass demonstrations and public comments. Student groups, professors, city and state legislators, women's organizations and local clergy joined the chorus of protest.

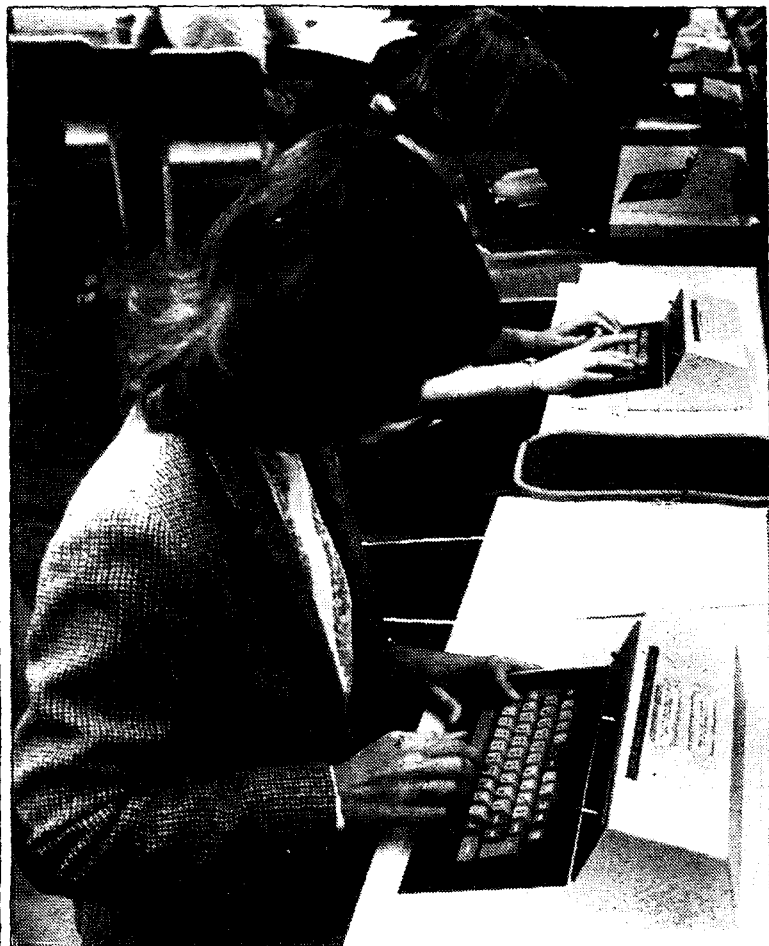
Local 34's triumph after 15 years of organizing attempts on campus and the democratic structure the union has developed since then have great significance for organized labor's efforts to regain strength, Yale labor history professor David Montgomery noted. He said labor must focus organizing drives on clerical and service employees, the fastest growing sector of the American workforce. Local 34, he said, provides a good model.

"This union is very democratic, of a quality I haven't seen around in the labor movement since the '40s," Montgomery said. Information travels swiftly

from Local 34's committee members to the rank and file through a 35-member negotiating committee, a 150-member steering committee and a 500-member contract committee.

The negotiating committee has represented Local 34 in talks with Yale, which only last week began to seriously address such major issues as job security, promotions and transfers and open-versus-agency shops. Because of progress on these issues, Local 34 postponed the strike, which threatened to shut down much of the university since Yale's unionized physical plant workers had been expected to honor picket lines.

Negotiating with clerical workers is a new predicament for universities like Yale. District 925 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is now about to sign its first contract



with the University of Washington, according to District 925 Executive Director Jackie Ruff. The process has taken two years.

It's never easy to negotiate the first contract because clerical workers have been unorganized in the past and their employers haven't grown accustomed to bargaining with them as equals, Ruff said. About 16 percent of the country's 20 million office workers are unionized, she added, and those 16 percent earn 30 percent more money than their unorganized counterparts. Clerical drives have taken place in the past year at Cornell, Harvard, the University of California, Columbia and other campuses.

"The Yale victory [last May] was encouraging for all office workers involved in organizing," Ruff noted. But will Local 34 pull off another such victory? That remains uncertain. The two sides haven't even begun to barter on salaries and benefits, where their proposals are far apart.

"The Yale administration will have to move faster if it has a prayer of avoiding a strike," said Local 34 chief negotiator John Wilhelm. "We can't wait until summer to strike."

—Carole and Paul Bass

Briefing: Computers' prescription to kill

The race is on between the U.S. and Japan to build a supercomputer up to 1,000 times faster than the 75 or more that exist today—one that can think and reason like a human being. Japan's aim is to become an even stronger force in the high-tech marketplace, while America's is to beef up its military prowess.

The Pentagon, according to Leon Osterweil, chairman of the Colorado University computer science department, believes the only way the U.S. can match the Russians is "by producing computing systems that can do antiballistic-missile detection and putting computer chips in bombs to make 'smart' bombs."

Supercomputers are the most powerful scientific computers in the world. At \$5-\$15 million apiece, they're also the most expensive. They grapple with tasks of immense complexity like nuclear weapons and aircraft design, the simulation of ocean systems and nuclear power plant accidents, fusion-energy research, weather forecasting and intelligence processing.

Today's supercomputers are 10,000 times faster than the electronic computers built in the early '50s to compute ballistic-missile trajectories. Yet scientists say that they are already several orders of magnitude too slow to solve urgent problems in engineering and technology.

With a computer capable of carrying out 10 trillion instructions per second—compared to the 100 million per second of today's fastest supercomputer or the half-million per second of a desktop microcomputer—scientists believe they can create a thinking machine.

Japanese and American scientists must both achieve radical breakthroughs in hardware and software in order to build this new "thinking computer." The plans of the two nations differ, however, when it comes to how they will use the new supercomputers.

Observers believe Japan's motivation is to leapfrog American technology to capture the marketplace with affordable computer products that can understand human speech and carry out spoken commands. The Japanese intend to make "knowledge" as desirable a commodity as automobiles or stereos.

U.S. supercomputer manufacturing today is virtually the domain of Minneapolis-based Cray Research, Inc., and Control Data Corp., and, more recently, of Denelcor, Inc., of Aurora, Colo., an up-and-comer in the competition that's expected to reach \$4 billion by 1990.

The driving force behind the U.S. supercomputer thrust, aside from the desire to be competitive in the industrial arena, appears to be military

gain.

A prime mover in the U.S. effort is the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). For many years a generous patron of computer technology, DARPA largely takes credit for developing the world's first supercomputer and for inaugurating the science of artificial intelligence (AI) by spearheading the establishment of AI centers at Carnegie-Mellon University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University.

DARPA's recently announced "Strategic Computing" project, funded at \$600 million over the next five years, is designed to develop supercomputers that will make possible a breed of "truly autonomous" aircraft, tanks and submarines.

A key objective of the project, according to *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, "is to enable supercomputers to perform (in war) like an intelligent human being without being programmed in minute detail for every possible eventuality."

Advanced Cruise missiles, for instance, "will require almost human-like capabilities to sense, reason, plan and navigate," said Robert Cooper, the director of DARPA.

The real push to build a new generation of supercomputers, CU's Osterweil says, comes

from the people at Lawrence Livermore. That, as well as the other national laboratories, is where new weapons are conceived. The space-based X-ray laser weapon, announced last year in President Reagan's "Star Wars" proposal and which is now being tested underground in Nevada, was developed at Livermore.

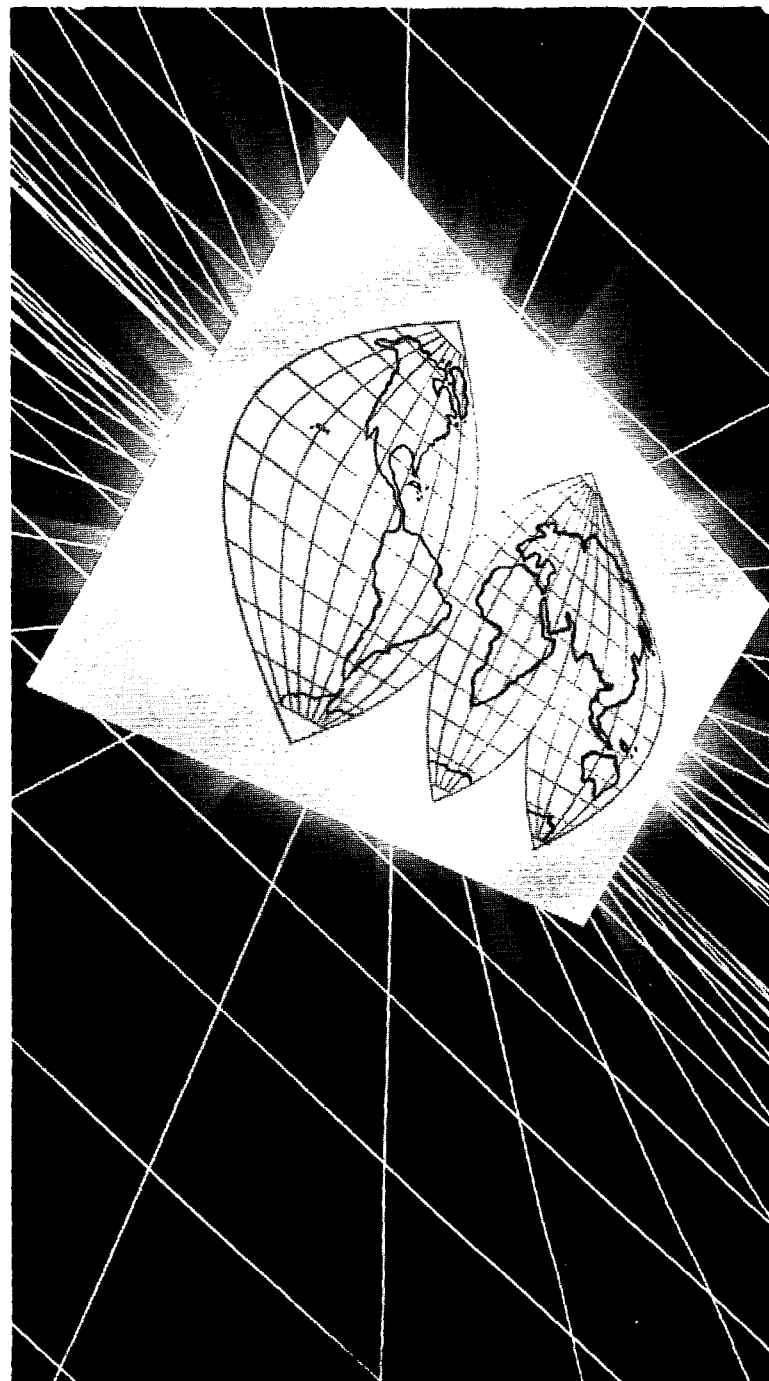
"Obviously people have designed bombs with far less computing power than we have today," says Dale Henderson, who uses a supercomputer to design nuclear weapons at the Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico.

But these earlier weapons didn't have the complicated safety mechanisms that now prevent bombs from "blowing up and spreading plutonium all around if you drop them on the ground" or "the fancy giz-switches so that if a terrorist tried to steal a weapon he couldn't do anything with it."

Supercomputer manufacturers are telling the government that if it doesn't guarantee a market for their machines, nothing less than U.S. leadership is at stake. The market for supercomputers is small, limited mostly to those with the big problems and with the big pocketbooks—the national labs, aerospace and oil exploration companies and a few universities.

"We would prefer to buy American," a director of the Los Alamos computer division told the *New York Times*. "But if the biggest and fastest computers were foreign, we would certainly have to consider them."

—S.K. Levin



Deficit

Continued from page 3
seems imminent.

Of course, Western Europe's social problems pale in comparison with those of the Third World, whose debt burden, now estimated at well in excess of half a trillion dollars, is exacerbated by rising interest rates. For Latin America as a whole, real per capita income is now 8 percent below the peak of 1980. A quarter of Brazil's working class is now unemployed or underemployed, and since there is no unemployment compensation of any kind, the streets of Rio de Janeiro are now clogged with people scrounging a living by shining shoes or hawking laundry detergent and Chiclets. Food prices more than doubled last year, with the prices of some staples quadrupling, resulting in food riots in Sao Paulo last spring and in Rio de Janeiro last fall. The Chilean economy fell an astounding 14 percent in 1983, while in Peru, where the drop was a mere 12 percent, real wages are now estimated at 60 percent of the 1973 level.

The international flashpoint, however, now seems to be Argentina, which, as *In These Times* went to press, is engaged in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with the international banks over their demands that Argentina pay up on \$2.5 billion in back interest on its \$43-billion foreign debt. Argentina, with foreign re-

servicing of just \$500 million, says that is simply impossible.

If Argentina fails to pay by the deadline of March 31, the banks would have to declare much of the loans to be lost (the first time that such a large chunk has been written off) and other Third World debtors might be inspired to take a similarly tough stance. In that case, the amazingly complex edifice of debt accords and reschedulings assembled by the IMF since the Mexican crisis 19 months ago would be shown to be made of sand and could very well collapse.

Rising interest rates, which are pushed ever higher as the U.S. Treasury borrows to finance its growing deficit, add to those pressures on the Third World and guarantee that sooner or later there will be a showdown with the banks. But they are only half the problem. The other half is the strong dollar, which rises as U.S. Treasury securities are bid up and is now estimated to be overvalued by 25 to 35 percent relative to the West German mark. For Third World countries, the effect is to add to their debt burden, since 80 percent of their loans are denominated in U.S. dollars. For the Europeans, the effect has been to provide little relief from energy costs, since oil is also valued in dollars.

Enter the yuppies.

For the U.S., on the other hand, the result, among other things, has been to fuel the "yuppie," high-tech revolution of Gary Hart. Indeed, computers are less affected by the strong dollar because American technical capability is still so strong.

The service sector is also less vulnerable, either because the services are unexportable, or, in the case of the banks and other financial institutions, because they are constantly juggling their holdings to take maximum advantage of currency fluctuations. Manufacturing, on the other hand, has been hobbled since American goods are, in effect, saddled internationally with a penalty of 25 to 35 percent.

Hence the America of Gary Hart: a nation composed mainly of computer engineers, accountants, lawyers, financial analysts, fashion designers and other young urban professionals. The rest—the auto workers, steel workers and other, less glamorous blue-collar types—will simply have become redundant, as many already have.

Of course, yuppies will eventually suffer, too, as the national debt mounts and debt payments siphon off an ever-increasing portion of the national wealth. That debt, which stood at \$914 billion in 1980, is now \$1.6 trillion and promises to reach \$2.8 trillion in five years. Should that occur, interest payments alone would amount to about \$210 billion a year, which is nearly equal to the current military outlay. In other words, it would mean a tax of roughly \$3,000 annually for every American household that would go to neither guns nor social services but right into the hands of investors, many of them overseas. With that kind of economic burden, the country's future would be less like Silicon Valley and more like the rustbowl of the Ohio Valley.

Each of these factors—rising interest rates, the overvalued dollar, the crip-

pling national debt—are severe in their individual effect. The great danger, though, is that they will all somehow come together in an immense financial collision. There are any number of possibilities. The Federal Reserve could tighten up on credit to the point where the nation is tipped over into recession, which would then drive down tax revenues and expand the federal deficit to \$300 billion a year or more. That in turn would drive interest rates up further while setting off a frenzied round of budget cutting in Washington resulting in years of severe austerity. Or the Third World could be pushed by higher interest rates to default, bringing the banks down with it. Or foreign investors could become frightened by the dimensions of America's financial hemorrhage and sell off their U.S. Treasury bonds and dollars in a wave of panic. That, too, would drive up interest rates, leading to the same highly unpleasant consequences.

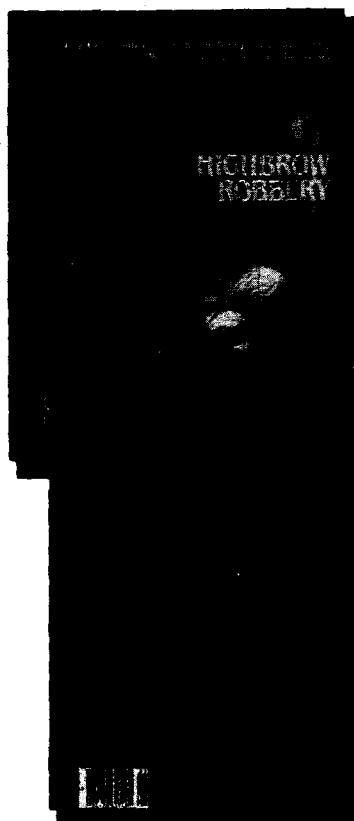
Meanwhile, the notion has arisen among some liberals and even some leftists that it is unseemly to talk to the voters about balanced budgets since what the economy really needs is more Keynesian stimulation. Better, they say, to leave such talk to the Republicans.

As Sam Bowles, the radical economist from the University of Massachusetts, observed recently in a *New York Times* op-ed article, "The deficit issue is a loser. Full employment, by contrast, is political gold." It is a rather cynical formulation, however, since it assumes that nothing is to be gained by opening the eyes of the electorate, including the working class, to Reagan's false recovery.

In truth, the world is being forced to pay for this country's growing military arsenal; it is being held hostage to Reagan's imperial ambitions; and it is certainly worthwhile to point this out. The U.S. is now actually enjoying a Latin American-style boom, characterized by growing deficits, an overvalued currency and heavy foreign borrowing. Just as visitors returning from Chile in the late '70s told wondrous tales of buying Johnny Walker Red Label scotch at \$4 a fifth, so are American middle-class consumers now able to buy imported French wines at nearly half the price of a few years ago. Unfortunately for the middle class, the buying binge—encouraged by an overvalued currency—will eventually come to a halt in this country as it did in Chile.

Of course, the austerity that would result from abruptly balancing the budget is no answer either, since it would mean deep recession, still higher unemployment and a host of related difficulties for Western Europe and Latin America. By now, it is clear that post-war international capitalism, after three decades of virtually uninterrupted boom, is in the midst of an epochal economic contraction. The crisis is not wholly Democratic or Republican, but systemic. The entire liberal capitalist tradition, which at one point or another has been supported by everyone from American Republicans to West European Communists, appears to have run out of steam. The only solution lies outside the system in a sweeping political and economic transformation.

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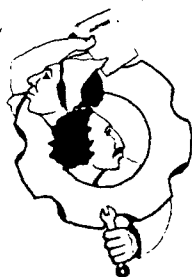
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By Kathy Hannan & Neal Ullestad

CLIFTON, AZ

AFTER NINE MONTHS OF bitter fighting, the strike against the Phelps Dodge Copper company may be all but over here yet a solid core of dedicated strikers and their families aren't giving up in Clifton, 120 miles northeast of Tucson.

The main reason the strikers and their families have been able to hold on so long and maintain hope—despite company brutality, massive state intervention and devastating flooding late last year—is the labor solidarity exhibited by the People's Clinic, which is operated by Dr. Jorge O'Leary.

One of the few things in Greenlee County not owned or controlled by Phelps Dodge, the clinic has provided free health care to strikers since mid-October, when O'Leary was fired from the PD-owned local hospital because he supported the strikers and was critical of policies that denied help to flood victims who didn't have the \$26 treatment fee. Last fall's flooding, the worst in the state's history, left thousands homeless in the San Francisco River valley, and in need of whatever help they could get.

The issues in question go back long before last July 1, when the 13 unions of the United Steelworkers-led Unity Council went out, and they stretch globally from the deserts and mountains of the Southwest to New York, Washington, D.C., and Santiago, Chile. Over the years, congressional reports as well as university historians have documented the ruthless corporate policies of Phelps Dodge. And the living proof of the toll of working for that corporation is evident in the weathered faces, broken bodies and determined minds of those whose grandparents and great-grandparents were among the 1,200 strikers and Wobblies deported by Phelps Dodge to the deserts of New Mexico in 1917. Phelps Dodge is notorious in Arizona, not only for its history of brutal anti-union policies, but also for an inordinant political influence that has reached from the governor's chair to the Oval Office in the White House.

The corporation is the nation's second largest copper producer. It is also the only copper company that failed to diversify in the '70s, with the exception of its wholly-owned subsidiary Western Nuclear (which eventually lost its largest customer, Washington Public Power, following a uranium price-fixing scandal in 1981).

Company administrators have blamed the workers for the difficulties that have plagued Phelps Dodge since the dramatic drop in copper prices. The unions—including, among others, the IBEW, Machinists, Laborers, Plumbers and Steam Fitters as well as the USWA—claim the company has the lowest production costs of any domestic copper producer. Also, questions of mismanagement have been raised in conjunction with the recent construction of a smelter in Playas, N.M., which is not near a mine.

And so last summer, when many copper workers had been laid off across the state and stock piles of ore had accumulated from months of peak production, the stage was set for a confrontation.

The strike.

The strike began July 1 when the 2,200 members of the 13 unions at Phelps Dodge operations in Arizona—in Ajo, Bisbee, Douglas and Morenci (three miles up the valley from Clifton)—turned down company proposals union members believed were designed from the start to force a strike and break the unions. While the other major copper companies had settled contracts with the unions before the end of June that included concessions to employers, Phelps Dodge unilaterally froze wages, called for wage cuts of 10 percent for new employees, reduced medical and vacation benefits and demanded substantial reductions in pensions and work safety rules.

The company refused to follow the



LABOR

The strike against Phelps Dodge Co. continues—barely

pattern bargaining that has prevailed in the industry for years. It gambled that the hundreds of desperate miners, who had been laid off since April 1982, would cross the picket lines and keep the mines and plants open. Previously, the company had followed the practice, adopted by other companies, of halting production during a strike, working only skeletal maintenance crews for repairs and hoping that the curtailment of production would drive up the price on copper futures. But this time, Phelps Dodge vowed to keep its operations going at all costs.

The company's policy of hiring back long-term layoffs led to deep splits within communities and even within families. Striking miners watched as old friends and even brothers and sons crossed picket lines and worked for Phelps Dodge. In a company town like Morenci, where everything—the homes, the swimming pool, the stores and even the high school football field—is owned by Phelps Dodge, tensions ran high from the beginning.

When Phelps Dodge announced in early August that those hired to replace strikers were permanent employees, hundreds of strikers and a crowd of supporters estimated by Department of Public Safety (DPS) officials at 2,000 massed at the main Morenci gate and disrupted the August 8 evening shift change. No one entered or left the plant that night. Other demonstrations in Ajo and Douglas indicated that Phelps Dodge's actions were unacceptable to the striking copper workers.

"Outside hiring was the straw that broke the camel's back," said Don Shelton, president of USWA Local 937 in Oracle, and state AFL-CIO vice president, whose local was among those earlier to settle with the Magma Copper Company. "Hiring from the outside was like pouring gasoline on a fire," he explained. But no one knew, until the state intervened, just how bitter the strike would become.

The state intervenes.

Gov. Bruce Babbitt, a Democrat called a "friend of labor" by state AFL-CIO leaders, scurried to Morenci following the mass picket and persuaded the company to halt production and hiring for 10 days to provide a "cooling off" period. Babbitt indicated he had a sympathetic understanding of the strikers' position and promised to get the company to bargain

in good faith.

On August 19 the production and hiring moratorium ended. Instead of keeping his word to strikers and pressuring the company, the governor showed his willingness to work with Phelps Dodge when he ordered the deployment of nearly 1,000 Department of Public Safety officers, National Guard troops and SWAT teams to Clifton, Morenci and Ajo to help keep Phelps Dodge operations running. "It looks like something out of a war movie," reported a Tucson newscaster. And martial law in Arizona was quickly dubbed "Gdansk Morenci."

The massive display of police force was ostensibly marshalled to "enforce law and order" in the face of "mob violence." But that Friday morning when the troops lined U.S. Route 666 and escorted Phelps Dodge's mile-long caravan of strike breakers into the Morenci plant, only the legal limit of 10 picketers stood at the gates.

When asked why so few showed up, the reply was clear. "We aren't fools. We know that you can't fight the Guard's M14s and M16s with clubs and rocks. Look what happened at Kent State."

The contradictions within the state apparatus and the widespread knowledge of Phelps Dodge's history were plainly evident when Tucson's *Arizona Daily Star* quoted a "top law enforcement official" in charge in Ajo as saying, "We're fed up. This whole scenario was adroitly planned by Phelps Dodge in New York. The only thing missing is the boxcars to move the strikers out. And instead they're using professional law enforcement as their goons to break the unions."

The floods.

The ravaging flood waters that pounded through the San Francisco River valley in early October and washed away the few possessions most strikers' families had left only further exposed the state government's role in perpetuating Phelps Dodge's intransigent position at the bargaining table and in keeping their 12-hours shifts going. Television news crews filmed National Guard helicopters dropping supplies onto Phelps Dodge property for the hundreds of strike breakers camped there, while in the valley below, Clifton's thousands of homeless were without food, shelter or drinking water. It was this situation following the flood that prompted Dr. O'Leary to pro-

pose a 10-day moratorium on hospital fees, which then led to his run-in with the company.

When O'Leary opened his People's Clinic last fall, striking miners—including carpenters, electricians and plumbers—transformed the small seed store into a clinic where people can receive quality health care. Special medical problems have resulted from the strike, including depression, stress, insomnia, alcoholism as well as nutritional deficiencies. The nutritional problems stem from having "only potatoes and coffee in many kitchens. They have meat only once a week," O'Leary said.

It's been tough going from the beginning for the People's Clinic, since patients are asked to pay only what they can afford. Yet the doctor proudly said that no one has been turned away.

O'Leary's concerns reach beyond his immediate patient load. He is also concerned about the lack of widespread labor solidarity. "Other unions have to realize that if they don't help us, they will be next. And then there will be no unions left," he said.

His comments underlined the findings of the House education and labor subcommittee in December. Headed by Rep. Bill Clay (D-MO), the committee issued a draft report that charged the Phelps Dodge Corporation with provoking the strikes and refusing to bargain in good faith. The report suggested that the firing of striking PATCO air traffic controllers by President Reagan could have inspired Phelps Dodge's intransigence. The report also says one could speculate that "the company's initial goal was to bust the unions."

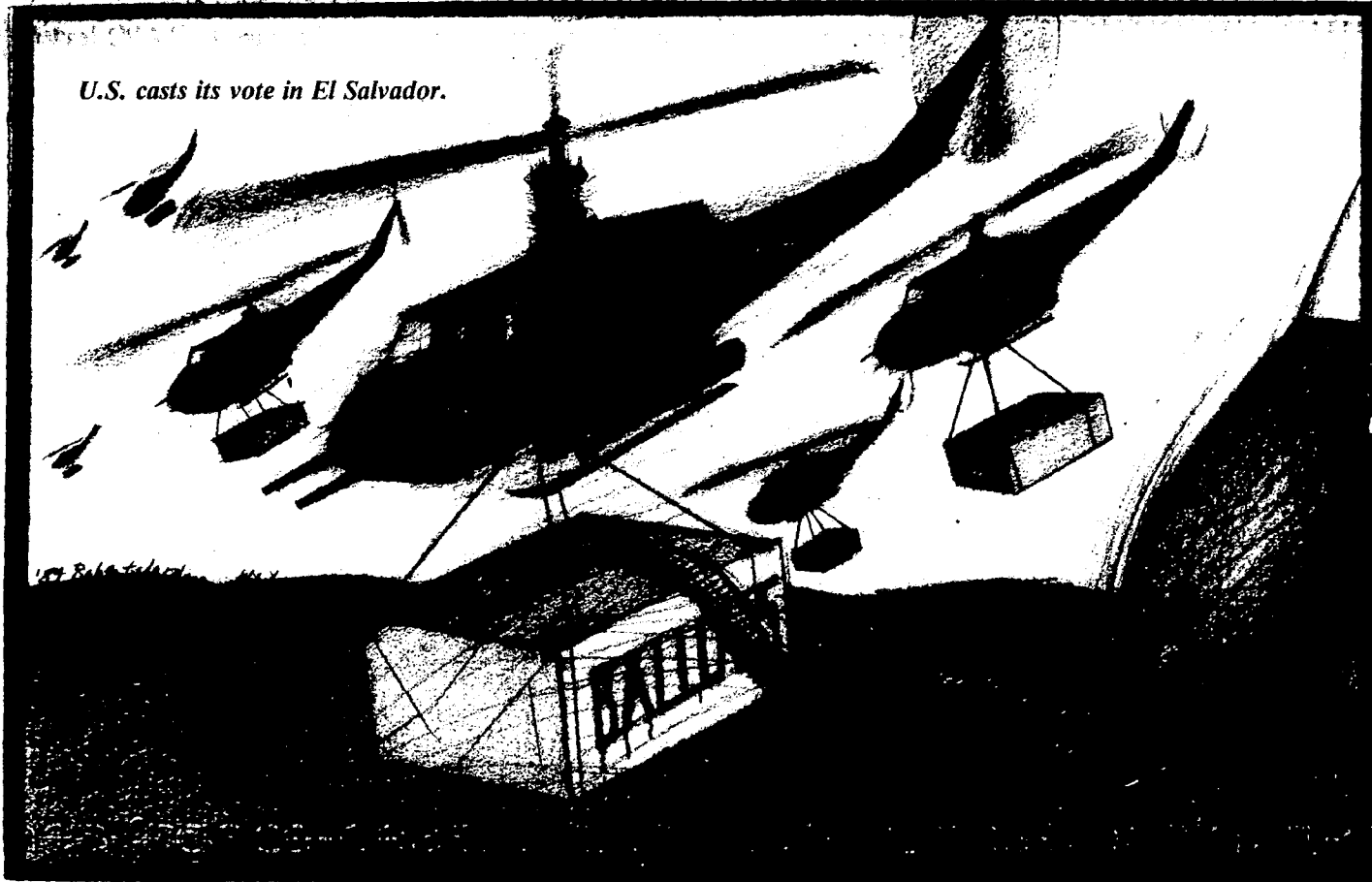
Clearly the fate of the striking copper workers has suffered from the general anti-union climate promoted by the Reagan administration. But the state of the labor movement overall has also proven to be a problem, since strikers have complained that there has been a lack of support from the national AFL-CIO. While 13 unions in the Unity Council have provided strike funds and Arizona unions have contributed to the Copper Strike Relief Fund, the UFW is the first "uninvolved" national union to use not only its limited financial resources, but also its media and political clout to focus attention on what will certainly be remembered as one of the key labor battles of the '80s.

Talks resumed between the company and the unions for a few hours in early January. But they were quickly closed, and increased activity on the picket line drew another phalanx of Department of Public Service officers to the county. On January 16 Greenlee County officials imposed a 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew prohibiting "loitering and gathering." Though the DPS requested a similar measure in Clifton, the city council soundly defeated the curfew proposal.

Strikers and their supporters are regu-

Continued on page 11

U.S. casts its vote in El Salvador.



CONGRESS

Stepped up military activity in Salvador spurs opposition

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION hopes to use the Salvadoran elections to consolidate support in Congress for its Central American policy. Some cynics even believe the elections' principal purpose was to satisfy or neutralize congressional critics of the administration's policy. But the administration has run into unexpected resistance from Congress.

Part of the reason for congressional opposition has been the administration's own doing. Its defiance of legislation making economic and military aid contingent upon human rights standards has angered some Republicans as well as Democrats. The administration also surprised supporters as well as critics by dramatically increasing its military posture in the region this winter and spring. Most Senate and House members had expected that the administration would moderate the military side of its policy during the American elections.

But congressional Democrats have also become increasingly intransigent toward the administration's policy. Fence-sitters have come out firmly against uncon-

ditional aid to the Salvadoran government and the Nicaraguan *contras*, and those already in opposition have made clear their support for negotiations between the Salvadoran government and the FDR/FMLN.

The Reagan administration has stepped up its military activities in Honduras. This week it began new military exercises, dubbed Granadero I, that will involve as many as 5,000 American troops near the Salvadoran border. On April 20, the U.S. will begin "Ocean Venture '84" in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, which will involve 30,000 American personnel.

One secret American unit stationed at Palmerola in Honduras is reportedly flying military reconnaissance missions over Salvadoran guerrilla positions. From bases in Honduras, the U.S. is also continuing to train and equip the Nicaraguan *contras*. According to *Newsweek*, Gen. Paul Gorman, head of the U.S. Southern Command, favors direct military intervention against the Salvadoran guerrillas. Gorman has proposed using unmarked AC-130 Spectre gunships against their positions.

The administration's new offensive has met resistance in Congress. After visiting Honduras, Sen. James Sasser (D-TN) charged that the U.S. is building permanent rather than temporary military facilities in Honduras, which it cannot do without congressional authorization. The Senate Appropriations subcommittee on military construction adopted a resolution banning the use of funds to build permanent facilities in Honduras.

On March 7 the administration requested \$92.75 million in immediate aid to the Salvadoran government and \$21 million in aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. The Reagan administration claimed the aid was needed immediately because the Salvadoran troops were running out of ammunition. But Pentagon figures that accompanied the request failed to convince either Republicans or Democrats of the urgency of the request. One House staff member speculated that the administration wanted the aid approved before the election out of fear that right-wing candidate Roberto D'Aubuisson, who has been linked to death squads, would win and Congress would move to cut off all future aid.

Last week the administration, in preparation for a vote on the Senate floor, agreed to compromise with moderate Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and settle for

\$61.7 million in aid to the Salvadoran government. But other Democrats, led by Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, were preparing to cut that amount still further and to make it conditional upon elimination of the death squads.

Support for negotiations.

The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives has yet to consider the administration's emergency request, but it can be expected to approve considerably less than the administration's compromise and to oppose any funds for the Nicaraguan *contras*. The bill's final outcome will depend on a House-Senate conference.

In response to the Kissinger Commission report and the administration's request for \$8 billion in long-term economic and military aid to Central America, House Democrats have sharpened their past opposition to administration policy. Previously, the Democratic opposition was defined by Rep. Michael Barnes (D-MD), the centrist and ambitious Demo-

crat who heads the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In the past, he had called for making military and economic aid contingent upon an improvement in the Salvadoran government's human rights record, but not upon the Salvadoran government's willingness to engage in negotiations with the FDR/FMLN.

But this year the Democrats on the House Foreign Affairs Committee decided to take a stronger position. Rather than simply hold out for less aid, Democrats like New Jersey freshman Robert Torricelli insisted that the committee stand for an entirely different approach. "In the past, we've been part of the problem," Torricelli said during the committee's Democratic caucus. "We have to become part of the solution. The Democrats owe more to the American people than offering less of a bad policy."

Under pressure from the Democratic caucus, Barnes' subcommittee rejected the administration and Kissinger Commission blueprint. It reported out a bill for fiscal year 1985 that forbade aid to Guatemala and made any aid to the Salvadoran government contingent not only upon an improvement in the government's human rights record, but also upon "the participation by the government of El Salvador in negotiations with all major parties to the conflict in El Salvador, in good faith and without preconditions."

The subcommittee also rejected the past practice of leaving the certification of a government's human rights record entirely to the State Department. The subcommittee's bill required that both the administration and Congress, through a joint resolution, certify that the Salvadoran government had met all the bill's conditions. This requirement was subsequently modified at the insistence of the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, moderate Dante Fascell (D-FL). But the final bill still requires that two-thirds of American aid be subject to joint certification. "We've never had such a strong and dramatic proposal as this," Cindy Buhl, a lobbyist for the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, said.

Most American policy opponents expect that when the voting is over, the administration will get most of what it wants for 1984 and 1985. What it does not get explicitly it can still get indirectly. For instance, it can bypass the ban on permanent military facilities in Honduras simply by insisting that the facilities it is building are temporary.

Yet the administration will not get the kind of long-range commitment that it wanted to use the Kissinger Commission to secure, and the Democrats will have clarified and solidified their own opposition to the future escalation of administration policy in Central America. ■

Mondale draws fire

Prior to March 14, former Vice-President Walter Mondale was supported for the presidency by most members of Washington's anti-intervention and arms control community. One supporter of Sen. Gary Hart said he found only five other Hart supporters among the hundreds who work in organizations opposed to the administration's arms and Central American policies.

But Mondale's March 14 speech at the Chicago Council for Foreign Relations has sent shock waves through this community. In that speech, he advocated keeping American troops in Honduras as a "bargaining chip" against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and as a means of offering security to the Hondurans. He also attacked Hart for hedging in a *Washington Post* interview on whether Cuba was "totalitarian" and for suggesting that poverty rather than Communism was the most serious threat to American interests in the Third World. In subsequent statements, Mondale criticized Hart, who opposes any American military involvement in Central America, for wanting to "pull the plug" on the region.

Cindy Buhl of the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy summed up the anti-intervention lobby's reaction with a shudder. "Mondale's position on Honduras was a real shock and a disappointment," she said. "What we are doing in Honduras in no way supports the security of the region or makes the Sandinistas more conciliatory. It only adds tension to the region and completely undermines the Contadora process, which Mondale says he supports."

Disappointment with Mondale's position has also spread to liberal Democrats in House and Senate. One important Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee was leaning toward Mondale, but according to his aide is now wavering because he "is concerned about Mondale's move to the right on Central America." An important House staff member concerned with Central American issues also expressed disappointment. "I think in the last few weeks it has become clear that Hart has been better than Mondale on this issue," he said. "He's more willing to say he's against intervention." ■

Congressional Democrats are beginning to get their backs up in election year.

AFRICA

Regional conflicts prompt new pacts

By Gay W. Seidman

WHEN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE won independence in the mid-'70s, black South Africans were jubilant over what the presence of independent socialist governments on their borders might mean for their struggle. After years of battling those governments, South Africa last month struck deals with both of them—deals that could bring major changes to the region.

Both last month's Mozambique-South Africa non-aggression pact and the Angola-South Africa agreement reached in mid-February have been hailed as Western diplomatic victories, in which Soviet-backed nations are finally responding to Western peace initiatives. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker was involved in setting up both deals, and President Reagan, Britain's Margaret Thatcher and West Germany's Helmut Kohl congratulated Mozambique on reaching agreement with South Africa.

But the agreements—which could lead toward Namibian independence on the one hand and shore up South Africa's apartheid regime on the other—are more the result of regional developments during the past year than of outside diplomatic moves. All three countries have been under great pressure to break what Mozambique's President Samora Machel called "the cycle of violence" that has been escalating in southern Africa since before 1980.

Of the trio, Mozambique is probably most anxious to find peace with its powerful neighbor. Inheriting a weak economy at independence from Portugal, Mozambique has been plagued with problems that range from a low level of technical skills to almost non-existent foreign exchange reserves. But these problems have been enormously exacerbated since 1980, when South Africa took control of a rebel Mozambican group, the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MRM).

Originally created by Rhodesia as a way to harass Mozambique for its support of Zimbabwean liberation, the MRM gave South Africa a tool with which to wage undeclared war on Mozambique. South Africa has also invaded Mozambique directly, to attack what it claimed were bases of the African National Congress (ANC), the main South African liberation group. But it was primarily the South Africa-backed MRM's campaign of economic sabotage—bombed roads, power stations and pipelines—that forced Mozambique to negotiate the security agreement, in which both governments promise to withdraw support for rebels in the other's country.

In the last three years the resistance movement has cost Mozambique more than \$4 billion. The final straw, however, may be the ongoing drought, which has driven thousands of Mozambicans over the border into neighboring Zimbabwe in search of food (see *In These Times*, February 29). Already struggling, the Mozambican economy seems near collapse—which is why South African and U.S. offers of food and other aid look so attractive.

The day before Mozambique signed the treaty of "non-aggression and good neighborliness" with South Africa, the MRM's Pretoria radio station shut down. Although at least one recent South African air drop to the rebels means they may continue fighting for a few months, Mozambique hopes that a withdrawal of South African support will end the MRM attacks and let the Mozambican govern-

ment get on with rebuilding the country. The day after the treaty was signed near the South Africa-Mozambique border, South Africa sent six tons of badly needed medical supplies to Maputo, Mozambique's capital.

In return for peace and promises of aid, Mozambique will try to stop ANC guerrillas from using its territory as a springboard into South Africa. Although Mozambique has never allowed the ANC to establish training camps or major bases there, its government has been willing to turn a relatively blind eye to armed guerrillas passing through on their way south. South Africa's claims that nearly 75 percent of guerrilla attacks inside South Africa are planned in Maputo are undoubtedly exaggerated, but certainly Mozambique has been more supportive of ANC efforts in the past than it will be now—especially since the non-aggression pact allows South Africa to send in its own troops to help Mozambique stop the gun-running.

Mozambique also seems to be giving up its fight to break out of the economic dependence on South Africa it inherited at independence. South Africa is the industrial as well as the military powerhouse of the region, and the independent states of southern Africa have tried to create a regional trade grouping to break South Africa's stranglehold. At the recent signing, South Africa's Prime Minister P.W. Botha spoke glowingly of future trade agreements between Mozambique and South Africa, which could undercut the regional effort to build greater autonomy.

Not surprisingly, the ANC and the Frontline states—independent African countries that have been supportive of the South African liberation struggle—have responded coolly to the new deal. Botswana's President Quett Masire said bluntly that Mozambique was bullied into the non-aggression pact, while Zimbabwe and other neighboring countries did not attend the signing ceremony. Doubtless, both Botswana and Zimbabwe see the treaty as an ominous sign of what lies ahead for them, too. ANC President Oliver Tambo said in London, "I think time will prove that it doesn't help South Africa to force countries to sign agreements which set them against the liberation struggle," but he didn't have many kind words for Mozambique, either.

Like Mozambique, Angola has suffered heavily in the last few years from South African attacks—to the tune of more than \$700 million. Although Angola's rich oil reserves make the economic damage a little easier to bear, the cost in lives and resources has been enormous. Since 1982, South Africa has occupied a 100 square kilometer area in southern Angola, hoping to block Namibian guerrillas from going into their country, which is illegally controlled by South Africa. Angola has provided steady support for SWAPO, the Namibian liberation movement, which most observers agree would win power in Namibia if fair elections were held tomorrow.

South Africa has also backed an anti-government group in Angola, as it has in Mozambique, and provided ground and air support for its drives further into Angola. UNITA, the Angolan rebel group, claimed at Angolan independence to represent a southern ethnic group. But its heavy reliance on South African support in the past few years has severely damaged its credibility.

Yet the combination of South African attacks and attacks by South Africa's proxy forces has undermined Angola's efforts to improve people's lives. Like Mozambique, Angola is plagued by

shortages of consumer goods, interrupted communications and the constant drain of resources for the war effort.

The Angolan army, however, is probably better trained and equipped than the Mozambican army—thanks in part to the presence of some 20,000 Cuban trainers as well as Soviet weapons bought with proceeds from Angola's oil reserves. In December a major South African thrust northward was repulsed, as several earlier invasion attempts have been.

Angola's agreement.

So the Angolans were in a much stronger position in their negotiations with South Africa, and the agreement the two countries reached in February in Lusaka, Zambia, is generally regarded as less ominous than the more recent Mozambican pact. The other Frontline states have commended the agreement, which will set up a joint Angolan-South African commission to supervise South Africa's withdrawal from Angola and the movements of SWAPO within Angola.

In one way at least, the agreement is a

support for the current SWAPO leadership.

Whatever the outcome—which looks bleaker since the recent flurry of diplomatic stances over the question of Cuban withdrawal—there is not likely to be a ceasefire yet in Namibia; SWAPO President Sam Nujoma has pointed out that in Namibia, it is SWAPO that is fighting, not Angola, and SWAPO was not represented at the Lusaka talks. The fighting will continue, he promised, until South Africa lives up to its promise to hold UN-supervised elections in Namibia.

Yet there are signs that South Africa may be trying to extricate itself from what promises to be an increasingly bitter war. Undoubtedly, black Namibians have suffered more than anyone else, not least from atrocities committed by the 100,000 South African soldiers stationed in the territory. But the costs of the war have also begun to worry the South African government. Even with the sale of Namibian diamonds and uranium, \$800 million a year for an apparently never-ending war gets expensive, and with an econ-



victory for Angola: both South Africa and the U.S., which was involved in setting up the talks, have backed down from their intransigent insistence that the Cuban trainers had to leave Angola before negotiations about South African withdrawal or Namibian independence could begin. Angola has always said it would only ask the Cubans—who came at Angola's request—to leave when the threat of South African invasion was removed.

Hopes that the stalemate might have been broken completely were dimmed when South Africa's Botha responded angrily to joint Angolan and Cuban declarations of support for SWAPO and for Namibian independence issued March 19. Earlier, Angola had rejected U.S. offers to patrol the Namibian border, on the grounds that the U.S. is not a neutral force in southern Africa, and had refused an invitation to an "all-party" conference that would have included the South African-backed rebel group, UNITA.

At a minimum, however, the Angola-South Africa agreement provides some breathing space for Angola and shows that the Reagan administration has been forced to acknowledge that its insistence on linking Cuban withdrawal with Namibian independence negotiations has been a complete disaster for southern Africa and for U.S. credibility on the continent as a whole.

More optimistic observers believe the pact may also be a first step toward a negotiated settlement in Namibia—although previous attempts at such settlements have invariably broken down when South Africa pulled out. But two weeks after the agreement to set up a joint commission was reached, SWAPO founder Herman Toivo ya Toivo had been released after 16 years in South African prisons and was touring the region declaring his

omy in the midst of a recession, South Africa's rulers are beginning to ask about a bottom line. Moreover, in the last year SWAPO has attacked farther and farther inside Namibia, in the heart of white farm country. The war zone has expanded to include much of the country, and South Africa must be beginning to calculate how much more it will cost in the future to retain control.

Costly war.

The war in Namibia could also grow costly for the Pretoria regime in terms of international and internal support. Since it backed out of holding elections in 1979, South Africa has come under increasing threat of international sanctions; all three front-running Democrats have expressed support for sanctions against South Africa over the Namibia question, and for its occupation of Angola.

Meanwhile at home, the government is beginning to face increasing resistance from young whites, for whom military service is long, arduous and compulsory. In January, the draft laws were tightened to make a six-year sentence for draft resisters mandatory, although hundreds of young white men will probably continue to evade the draft by going underground or into exile. The regime is also beginning to look beyond the white community to increase the pool of draftable men: there are signs that the government will soon begin to conscript men classified "coloured" (mixed race) and "Asian" under South Africa's apartheid system.

The Pretoria regime faces other internal pressures, too, far beyond the costs of the war in Namibia. Massive demonstrations and strikes during the last year have dimmed hopes that the new apartheid constitution—which will give "col-

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MALTA

Conference shows lack of dialogue

By Diana Johnstone

VALLETTA, MALTA

IT WAS A GOOD, PERHAPS EVEN necessary idea to hold an international conference on peace and liberation, bringing together peace activists and Third World liberation movements for a frank but friendly dialogue on what separates them and what can bring them together. People came from every continent for the four-day conference on this Mediterranean island.

Most were disappointed by what went on, yet by the time it ended, with the characteristic optimism of activists, they were glad they had come. It was a learning experience, even if some of the most important lessons were how—or how *not*—to organize further conferences with similar aims.

Since their official host was a Franciscan friar, some activists arrived expecting to be lodged in a monastery and nourished on berries. Instead, they were whisked from the airport to a luxury hotel built by Libya. In the lobby, the literature table was piled high with Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's little *Green Book* (the answer to Mao's *Red Book*) and other literature celebrating the accomplishments of the Libyan Jamahiriya. Shocked, a couple of Americans wanted to turn around and go home. Austrian organizers gave only vague answers as to how much of the conference costs were being paid by Libya and how much by other sponsors.

At least the general coloration was green and not red. The anti-Soviet Afghan resistance was prominent, East European dissidents were invited and there was considerable emphasis on non-alignment with either of the blocs and their superpowers. Little Malta was there before our eyes to illustrate the reality of non-alignment in an imperfect world.

What the Maltese hosts referred to as their "island of peace" has almost always lived off war—in particular off its strategic position in the center of the Mediterranean, midway between Sicily and the North African coast. Malta got its independence from Britain in 1964. The Labor Party government headed by Prime Minister Dom Mintoff removed British military bases from the rocky, densely populated island in 1979, which meant loss of leasing revenues, a hard slap for an economy obliged to import most of its food. But the Libyans eased the potential crisis through heavy investment and subsidies.

In 1980, however, a dispute over oil drilling rights in waters 60 miles south of Malta also claimed by Libya led Mintoff to throw out the Libyans and make a neutral treaty with Italy that provided military protection. Malta's neutrality is also guaranteed by the Soviet Union.

Eventually, however, the wealthy Libyans were let back in, and they remain the primary investors in the island, though there is considerable European investment as well.

Thus, "non-alignment," as practiced on Malta, is not so much independence as



Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua's minister of culture and goodwill ambassador

a complex balance of dependencies, not so much isolation as multiple involvement.

But failure to solve the deepening unemployment problem means the Labor Party faces probable defeat in the 1987 elections, whereupon the right-wing Nationalist Party would probably try to make Malta a Western military base once again. The Maltese point out that their peace policy costs them dearly. Thus the conference was held at Malta, according to European organizers, to support its neutrality.

Hosting the conference was the prime minister's own look-alike brother, Dionysius Mintoff, who herded the 150 guests off to his "Peace Lab," where Nicaragua's minister of culture and goodwill ambassador, former Trappist monk Ernesto Cardenal, symbolically planted an olive tree. The Lab's church displayed murals (reminiscent of Detroit wall painting) celebrating Pope John XXIII, Lenin, Nasser, Mao and Archbishop Makarios, among others. The Peace Lab seems to specialize in giving the government's non-aligned policy a semi-religious expression in this Catholic island where Prime Minister Mintoff is in conflict with the Church hierarchy over extensive Church property on the island.

Alfred Mechttersheimer, a former Bundeswehr officer who heads his own influential independent peace research institute outside Munich, said it was his idea to hold the conference at Malta, in order to seek to answer the twin questions, "Can the peace movement become a liberation movement?" and "Can the liberation movements become a peace movement?"

Intriguing questions, but there was too little dialogue. Olive tree plantings and other ceremonials took up a great deal of time. Plenary sessions were filled with self-introductory monologues. Almost every group assumed that the others in attendance didn't know about their struggle, and that this deficiency had to be corrected immediately. Only the Japanese delegation had the exquisite good sense to forego its opportunity to talk about itself. A Yugoslav woman observed that most of the groups present were too wrapped up in their local work to have an international perspective.

What's in an olive tree?

The Libyan co-sponsorship caused several problems. The Libyans evidently decided which Africans and Arabs to invite, making for biased and incomplete representation. Second, the particularly large (more than 30) Italian delegation—which seemed to spend most of its time in its own animated caucus—was extremely wary of being linked to Qadhafi in any way. Almost all the Italians opposed the planned trip to the newly operational U.S. Cruise missile base at Comiso in nearby Sicily on the last day of the conference. The idea was to plant some more

symbolic olive trees.

The Italians objected, complaining that the demonstration had not been prepared with local Italian peace movements and might be described by the Italian press as an invasion of Third World terrorists paid by Qadhafi. The Maltese retorted angrily that no Italian had consulted them about stationing nuclear missiles practically next door. Less than half the conference, enthusiastically led by Mechttersheimer and another former military officer, Falco Accame—who was a Socialist member of the Italian parliament and chairman of its defense committee before he broke with Italian Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi over the NATO missiles—finally set out on a Sunday picnic excursion to Comiso. The planned olive tree demonstration was dropped in favor of a tour of the town and a visit to its Resistance Monument.

One of the martyrs commemorated by the Comiso monument is Patrice Lumumba, first prime minister of the independent Congo (Zaire), murdered in 1961, whose daughter Juliana was attending the conference. Although Italian law does not require visas for day-trip tourists, Juliana Lumumba and seven other Third World people were denied entry by Italian authorities when they tried to disembark in Catania. They spent the day on the boat, heavily guarded by deliberately rude officials.

On every level the conference was inconclusive. There was far too little frank examination of the differences between the peace movements of the North and the liberation movements of the South—examination that is necessary precisely in order to bring them together.

In the course of the plenary session's self-justification monologues, a few genuine sparks flew. A man from Chad said bluntly that liberation movements were wondering if peace movements were still another way to put them down. On the other side of the barricades, a young woman from Greenham Common expressed shock and horror at all these potential male rapists and their violence.

One way to try to bridge this gap between liberation violence and pacifist non-violence is Northern guilt of Southern exploitation and suffering. This is the approach, notably, of the Catholic left and liberation theology. It was illustrated by a debate between Ernesto Cardenal and Philip Berrigan, old friends with no essential differences. Berrigan said violence was not the issue, but rather what you are ready to do for your suffering brothers and sisters. Violence, he said, is coming from the North, from U.S. imperialism.

A newer and more comprehensive approach to bridging the gap is being developed by some of the German Greens, and at the conference by Michaela von Freyhold in particular. (The two approaches can be complementary; the real opposition is with those who do not try to bridge

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the gap.) To appreciate this approach requires, above all, facing up to certain failures.

As the Malta conference was taking place, the revolutionary government of Mozambique was signing a humiliating agreement with South Africa. The successful armed struggle of a decade ago had proved unable to lead on to successful economic development. Meanwhile, the U.S. and South Africa have gone into the counter-guerrilla game, and the Mozambique regime was forced to give in to South African pressures in the form of economic strangulation and South Africa-backed guerrillas. As a result, Mozambique is withdrawing its support of the African National Congress in its struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

There was no mention of these events at the Malta conference. As usual, the liberation movement people took a triumphant tone, confident in their final victory. Yet they must have had some doubts, some worries, or why would they even bother to meet with peace movements? There is no reason to assume that the growing nuclear arsenals will be used in a suicidal East-West holocaust rather than by a nuclear power (such as the U.S.) against a Third World adversary in the hemisphere where wars are really happening. Libya is evidently worried by the Comiso Cruise missile base only a short distance away.

In Europe, as Michaela pointed out, many people who supported armed liberation movements during the '60s and '70s have come to doubt that victorious armed struggle can "produce the type of culture

and organization and the economic strategy that would be conducive to emancipation and peoples' power afterwards—even if some of the worst abuses and inequities of the old regime are abolished."

Even worse, the practice of armed struggle in Indochina led to the various revolutionary armies warring against each other. The arms and causes of conflict shipped south by the advanced industrial nations are fueling the growing slaughter of Third World people by each other. To a Third World delegate who said violence by liberation movements was only a last resort, Michaela said she agreed it might be necessary as a last resort but that she thought some movements turned to violence before exhausting all other means.

"Internationalism of the '60s and '70s in Europe has often made a myth out of armed struggle—a myth that has had several negative effects," she wrote in her paper to the conference. "It has tended to reinforce militaristic self-identification in the movements we have supported, which has not done those movements any good. Even if armed struggle is necessary, the adulation for the man who holds a gun raised over his head does not express the culture or the aims of the people who take part in the struggle. It has blocked our attention in regard to non-violent struggles that need our support and has made us insensitive toward oppression and resistance where the guns are silent. The claim of the Palestinians that they had to resort to hijacking to attract international attention to their case is a justified accusation against the con-

science of internationalists."

Other movements have also experienced setbacks. The European peace movement can also be heard congratulating itself beyond what its actual achievements have warranted. The young Greenham Common woman at the conference claimed that the recent successful operational run of Cruise missiles outside their base at Greenham Common was really "a victory for us" because the NATO forces had had to go to some trouble to do it. Self-satisfaction over this sort of subjective "victory"—which looks like a defeat to people outside the enchanted circle—as well as an absence of constructive self-criticism and a broader perspective could lead the women's peace camps, despite their great contribution at one stage of the movement, to deteriorate into a sort of Hyde Park Corner of cranks totally ignored by the rest of society.

Evidently not everyone in Europe or the U.S. has been persuaded that East-West nuclear holocaust is a real danger; the U.S. and the USSR have been growling at each other too long without anything really dramatic happening. To widen the movement, it may be necessary to point to a broader range of dangers. To finance their own arms race, the industrial powers continue to pour more and more advanced weaponry into the Third World—countries so despoiled by the ravenous consumption of the rich capitalist nations that hatred for the rich may flare up in passionate vengeance.

The world appears to be teetering on the edge of widespread nuclear proliferation. The danger of this mad course is be-

ginning to dawn on people in Europe, especially in small vulnerable places like Holland and Germany. A bit of reflection on this matter may swell support to the campaign being promoted by Aaron Tovish of Greenpeace, who attended the conference, to demand serious steps toward nuclear disarmament at next year's scheduled review of the Nuclear Arms Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Internationalism has ceased to be a luxury and has to be related to our own struggle for survival," wrote Michaela von Freyhold. "In the future we should go beyond supporting this or that movement with words and money and put ourselves between the fronts. Our first duty in this respect will be to stop our own governments from supporting wars and sending weapons elsewhere."

Beyond demonstrations and peace camps, she sees a need for "an international peace force that is courageous and committed enough to intervene in international conflicts in the way Greenpeace has done on a number of ecological issues." This sounds utopian, but, she concluded: "Creating a world where power no longer comes from the barrel of a gun does require utopian vision and bold practice."

The Malta conference, which often lent itself to satire, ended without concrete results—so did a Brussels conference a few days later that was trying to save the European Economic Community and a Lausanne conference trying to save Lebanon. As Gramsci observed half a century ago, the old world is dying, and the new one still refuses to be born.

Strike

Continued from page 7

larly harassed by the police and even shot at by strike breakers. Valentine's Day reports confirmed that two Phelps Dodge employees had been arrested by the Greenlee county sheriff and charged with shooting nine rounds into the home of strike leader Angel Rodriguez, president of the Steelworkers local. Strikers have been repeatedly referred to as "animals" by company and law enforcement officials.

Investigations and lawsuits have come from both sides. State agencies have undertaken massive surveillance and intelligence gathering in unsuccessful attempts to find links between the union and organized crime. On the other side, continuing investigations have been made into the role of the state and local law enforcement agencies, and charges have been filed by the union with the NLRB claiming company misconduct. Stockholders have raised issues of mismanagement, citing price fixing and poor construction and investment planning. Rulings and reactions have been mixed, with the strikers still continuing (for now) to have their medical benefits provided by Phelps Dodge. Yet the company has been quite successful with its eviction attempts.

In mid-March Phelps Dodge revitalized its tactics of evictions and threw more families out of their homes. Company officials have not commented on where they expect the strikers to move or where their children are to finish school.

For now the battle continues. But without additional aid there is little hope that the strikers can hang on. Clearly, that would be a bitter defeat for the labor movement.

One of the most repeated phrases in this strike has been "United we stand, divided we fall." While the strikers were solidly united at first, the labor movement was not united behind them. The strikers in Clifton seem doomed by that failure.

Donations to the People's Clinic can be sent to P.O. Box 1047, Clifton AZ 85533.

Kathy Hannan is a membership representative and organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 944, and the past president of the 25,000-member Southern Arizona Central Labor Council. Neal Ullestad is the recording secretary of AFSCME Local 499 in Tucson.

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By Pat Auiderheide

"CUBAN CINEMA WAS BORN without original sin," novelist-screenwriter Manuel Pereira likes to say. He means it began with the 1959 revolution; its tensions and textures are those of life in socialist Cuba. Currently, Cuban cinema is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

In March 1959, when the Cuban Institute for the Art and Industry of Cinema (ICAIC) was formed, filmmakers found the richest possible dramatic material right outside their doors. Then in the early '60s, Cubans became internationally famous for their brilliant, punchy, controversial documentaries. Taking their film experiment further, they played in fiction features—*Memories of Underdevelopment*, *The Other Francisco*, *Lucia*—with documentary style. For a while, it looked like Cubans were developing not only a film industry but a film language.

But recently Cuban film has been out of the news. Actually it's been "in development," as they like to say in Hollywood. Now veteran filmmakers like Tomas Gutierrez Alea, Santiago Alvarez and Humberto Solas have finished features, and a new generation of directors is debuting. This burst of production is rooted in the same soil as Cuban film's two earlier phases—the great rolling social changes that in Cuba go under one handy rubric: "The Revolution."

Each of the new productions find filmmakers addressing the questions of a maturing revolution. Gutierrez Alea's *Hasta certia Punto* (*Up to a Point*) puts the filmmakers on the spot, in a movie about

making a movie. Under Octavio Gomez' musical *Permuta*, he casts characters from Afro-Cuban folklore. "I wanted to make a musical where the music asserts its real-life moving energy in the society," he says. And in the wry domestic comedy *Permuta* (*The Exchange*) by new-generation director Juan Carlos Tabio, a mother's attempts to make the perfect bourgeois arrangements for her daughter's wedding collide with her offspring's post-1959 attitudes. "I wanted to show the clash between old and new that we're still living through," says Tabio. "My style is comic, but comedy is a serious thing."

Situation comedy is a late-breaking phenomenon in Cuban cinema. Such earlier works as Gutierrez Alea's *Death of a Bureaucrat* and *The Survivors* employed a mordant, ironic humor, and Alvarez' documentary essays regularly use mockery and ridicule. But just as the beaches once occupied by patrols warding off invasion are now packed on weekends with sunburned kids and picnicking families, so the stark drama of earlier films is ceding to the treatment of more intimate and complex contradictions in daily life.

You can see it in documentaries as well as in fiction. (ICAIC only produces a handful of features every year, but makes a newsreel to be shown in theaters each week and around 30 or 40 documentaries annually.) With wit and humor, documentaries are exploring the tensions of daily life—sexual equality, for instance, mandated by law in 1975 and ever since a hot topic of public discussion. Rolando Diaz' half-hour *Controversia* documents a discussion among rural husbands and wives over domestic sex roles. As their comments reveal longstanding tensions and unresolved problems, Diaz intercuts

images of a man on a horse, entering an idyllic glade heroically. As comments sharpen, the horse gets ever more skittish, until finally horse and rider turn tail and run.

Another documentary, *El Piropo*, suggests that macho ideals are not so easily banished. The highly popular short made by Luiz Bernaza, celebrates the custom of *piropos*, the sexual salvos men offer women passersby. A stuffy, scholarly narrator interviews men and women on the street, and his little lectures are punctuated with cheesecake visuals and ooh-la-la remarks. In one way, the film stands as evidence of artistic freedom, since its leering visual style, although sociologically insightful, is hardly ideologically correct.

Filmic wit and humor doesn't have to have an obvious relation to social issues. For instance, the short cartoons that often precede features in theaters, many of them by master animator Juan Padron, are worlds inhabited by hapless vampires, comic drunks and quixotic creatures from outer space. But even in animation you can find close ties with the real.

Padron created the highly popular cartoon character Elpidio Valdes, a Cuban patriot in the 1898 War of Independence. Valdes is a sturdy comic character who pits his peasant wit and weapons—especially the machete—against sophisticated enemies, both Spanish and American. In the latest animated feature, *Elpidio Valdes contra el Dolar y el Canon* (*Elpidio Valdes against the Dollar and the Cannon*), Valdes' inventor buddy gives him a boomerang machete, to the vast amusement of young audiences.

Even in animation, the issue of sex roles emerges. Originally Valdes was a lone hero. "But the young girls in the Pioneers [the Scout-like youth groups] complained—after all, 70 percent of the

Pioneer leaders are girls," says Padron. "So now Elpidio has a companion, Maria Silvia, who does everything he does."

The lighter touch in films is only one evidence of the way films are exploring a deepening complexity in the social process. For instance, Pastor Vega (*Portrait of Teresa*) has now made *La Habanera*, in which love and heartbreak come to a psychiatrist. Vega says about his style of filmmaking, "I don't mix fiction and documentary directly—I want to explore what happens inside people's homes and inside their consciences. You can't film the hearts of men with a candid camera. That's why I use fiction, although I am always looking for the best way to make the moment authentic. My ideal is, perhaps, what Flaherty accomplished in *Nanook of the North*—that authenticity on the screen. The things that most influence daily life are the unconscious ones—the neorealists knew that."

Revolutionary art.

From the start, Cuban filmmakers set out not simply to make movies, but to create art engaged in a revolutionary process. "In 1959," says Gutierrez Alea, "we were thrown into the middle of a tremendous social change. Before 1959, we had tried everything to make movies and couldn't, no matter what we did. I had studied in Italy, but I had never made a film. And then suddenly—we could do anything. We had to invent our own cinema."

The Italian neorealists provided inspiration, and so did necessity. "The very difficulties we had with getting equipment, with having to get films out quickly, it was all a stimulus to invent a style," says Cuban documentary's "father," Santiago Alvarez. Efficiency, availability and urgency went into the style that Alvarez put his stamp on—newsreels and shorts using the scantiest possible narration, powerful and shocking montages, provocative cartoons, snippets from magazines and newspapers, bold title cards and animation. The newsreels, which typically made a nine-minute essay argued through images, didn't just deliver information but raised a new voice.

With their experiments in montage, the Cuban filmmakers were anything but

Photographs from:
A Decade of Cuban
Documentary Film

**CUBA
VISION**

naive about the relationship of the camera to the event. When they began making fiction features, they also began to combine traditional fiction style with what they had learned to do in documentary.

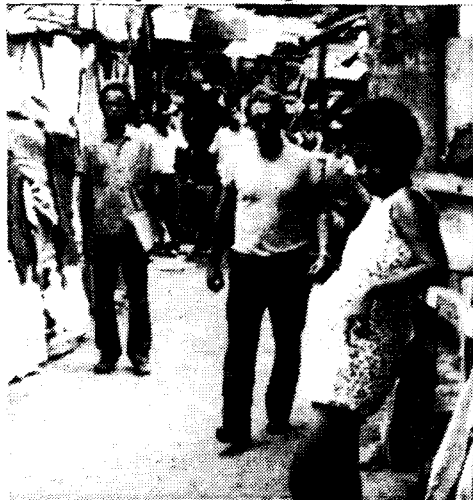
Manuel Octavio Gomez' *First Charge of the Machete*, for example, pretends that a news crew is filming a documentary during the 1868 independence war. Officials pontificate at their desks while horsemen charge up a hill; bourgeois housewives comment on the war while men puffing on cigars argue with each other on the street. Cinematographer Manuel Herrera's ceaseless experimentation resulted in *Machete*, in contrasting use of solarized, sepia-toned and sparkling black-and-white footage, all making different comments on the quality of reporting. The live-from-the-combat-zone style brought a revolutionary immediacy to century-old history.

Perhaps the most challenging example of a fiction-documentary mix in Phase Two of Cuban cinema was *One Way or Another*, whose director Sara Gomez died of cancer before the film's editing was complete. In the film, a young idealistic social worker tries to teach kids from an underclass where African folklore traditions are maintained in a hermetic and macho environment. She falls in love with a local man who is struggling to break out of the neighborhood's defensive insularity. The film starkly juxtaposes three film styles: survey shots of street scenes and construction, overlaid with cool, factual narration; a traditional fiction love story; and *verite*-style workplace scenes (some real and some staged) in his factory and her school. *One Way or Another* is a ruthlessly honest view of the pain and struggle involved in changing relationships. Shocking at the time, the film still has a disturbing effect on viewers.

"I think Sara Gomez was the one who most intensively used the language of documentary in fiction," says Marisol Trujillo, one of the women among the new generation of filmmakers. "Unfortunately, her death stopped some projects in progress, and we're still waiting for someone to pick up her flag."

That moment may be arriving, however, since Cuban cinema is flourishing with experiments in filming-the-real in all directions. Not only are documentary styles surfacing in fiction, but fiction is becoming part of documentary work. One example is a recent documentary about a pre-revolutionary scandal, *Cronica de Una Infamia (Story of a Scandal)*. Except for a few feet of archival footage, most of the film is reconstructed to look as if it were filmed then.

Filmmaker Miguel Torres, who was a child when the 1949 incident occurred, had been fascinated by the public uproar caused when a U.S. Marine scaled a statue of national hero Jose Marti and urinated on it. He wanted to recreate the sense of that moment, not through interviews or through a montage of contemporary documents, but by making a movie that "would have been made by the ideal documentary filmmaker—someone in the right place at the right time with the



right equipment—at the time." *Cronica* does indeed have a shocking you-are-there quality.

Of course, other documentaries continue in a more straightforward critical tradition, although their subject matter may be anything but expectable. For example, *Historia de Una Descarga*, by Melchor Casals, looks at the start as though it will be a piece of promotion for a new harbor facility in the interior port of Cienfuegos. But it turns out to be the record of a debacle—an attempt to unload a pulp shipment to a factory that is shut down without proper papers or storage facilities or even the right unloading equipment.

New film language.

If Cuban filmmakers are indeed creating a new language as they claim, it is not for the pleasure of hearing themselves talk. As Gutierrez Alea says, "The most important thing to realize is not just that there is a new Cuban cinema, but there is a new spectator as well."

Havana is full of film buffs. On any evening you'll find long lines for Havana's city-center cinemas, and in neighborhood movie houses there is a steady flow of mothers with children, dating couples and adolescents.

In 1969, filmmaker Julio Garcia Espin-

osa argued in an essay called "For an Imperfect Cinema" that filmmakers had to transcend the traditional division between an artistic elite and a passive mass audience. Now in 1984 he says, "we still need to develop a cinema that has a direct relationship with the popular class. But I think we have seen some fundamental change—we have spectators who are richer and more complex than before the revolution, and they are pushing us."

Cuban audiences are cinema sophisticates, especially in the younger generation, according to Juan Padron, who has now watched the reactions of children to his films for more than a decade. "These days kids understand flashback, special effects, ellipsis much quicker than they did 10 years ago," he says, although he says there are still big differences in reaction between the urban and the rural audiences.

Then how do Cuban filmmakers explain popular taste for lowest-common-denominator movies? "Look, these films use failsafe techniques of spectacle, like the circus does," says Gutierrez Alea. "There will always be an appeal in spectacle, and there's no need to throw it away."

The Cuban spectator has plenty of opportunity to learn about cinema. Besides the spectrum available in theatrical release, movies are also shown on television—sometimes even the latest American releases, which are lifted off satellite transmissions to cable channels. The "mobile moviehouses" that in the '60s brought movies to peasants who had never even seen an electric light bulb still operate in rural areas, and are now in the hands of the local government, or Poder Popular. ICAIC has also been upgrading sound and projection quality in regional theaters and improving distribution outside major cities.

Although ICAIC has its own film periodical, *Cine Cubana*, television is the most important source of movie criticism and information. Rarely is a film shown on TV without some attempt to provide a context for it. For example, the "Historia de Cine" series offers background information explaining the historical importance of the classic film shown that week. The weekly "Cinemateca" show runs back-to-back two or even three films on a

Continued on page 22

Cuban films in the U.S.

It's not easy to see Cuban films in the U.S., for good reason. Although Cuban films are allowed to be shown, the U.S. government freezes all profits from U.S. bookings. Despite this, some Cuban films are available. New Yorker Films has taken over distribution of 14 Cuban features from Unifilm, ICAIC's main distributor before going out of business. Young Filmmakers Video Arts rents Cuban documentaries and organizes a touring program.

Also, Cuban film regularly shows at Filmex and other U.S. festivals, although a Cuban film has never shown at the New York Film Festival.

Even in other countries, the shadow of U.S. disapproval falls on international sales. "A lot of the big distributors won't buy our films because they say they are afraid their access to North American movies will get cut off. I'm sure it's not all political. After all, no one wants a new competitor," says Pastor Vega, in charge of ICAIC's international relations.

One of ICAIC's more dependable sources of international income is, as it is for independent filmmakers internationally, European television. "They buy a lot of documentaries, and the subject doesn't seem to matter much. They do demand an authentic tone, and of course, that is our special area of excellence," says Vega.

For more information, contact New Yorker Films, 16 W. 61st St., New York, NY 10023; Young Filmmakers, 4 Rivington St., New York, NY 10002.

—P.A.



Cuban cinema enters a new phase—one that addresses the questions of a maturing revolution.

A black and white caricature of a man with a large, bulbous nose, thick lips, and a receding hairline. He is wearing a suit jacket and a tie. The drawing is signed 'Rothco' in the bottom right corner.

cc: John Pierotti/BOTHCO

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LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

SELLING OUT

TWO SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS emerged from the Illinois primary that were denigrated and dismissed in David Moberg's pre-primary report (*ITT*, March 21). In spite of Moberg's contention that "blacks...weren't taking [Jackson's] candidacy seriously," Jesse Jackson's astounding vote totals among blacks continued to underline the power and significance of his insurgent campaign. White leftists and progressives better figure out ways to join that campaign inside and outside the electoral arena and to combat racist sentiments that consign Jackson's candidacy to the fringes of American politics.

On the other hand, before "leftists" and "progressives" jump on the Mondale bandwagon, they should understand the full import of Mondale's attack on Hart's view of foreign policy. Mondale's posturing in the Illinois primary revealed more than an election ploy; rather, it was a demonstration of the persistence of Cold War liberalism. Rather than selling Walter Mondale (or Gary Hart) as the only alternative to Reagan for the American left (and, thus, selling out Third World revolutionaries and the victims of U.S. imperialism everywhere), why not try seriously exploring those disparate social movements in America that challenge Reaganism at the base (blacks and other minorities, anti-nuke and feminist activists, liberation religionists and gays) and help facilitate a real rainbow coalition?

—Fran Shor
Detroit

SKIMPY

THE LEFT NEEDS TO BECOME VISIBLE in the industrial policy debate so that Americans are offered a policy other than those of Felix Rohatyn and the AFL-CIO. So I had hoped that your coverage of the "Growth Pains" conference at UC Berkeley would be more in-depth (especially since in the same issue Gary Hart's neo-liberalism is given the full treatment). Conferences such as these are important first steps in the left's public discourse toward a concrete economic/industrial policy of our own, and *ITT*'s thoroughgoing coverage is absolutely essential.

—Richard Cosby
San Francisco

PUERTO RICAN POLL

THE HIGHLY CONDENSED NATURE OF your "In Short" piece on our national opinion poll of Puerto Ricans on the presidential race (*ITT*, March 14) inadvertently left the false impression that our organization supports the candidacy of the Rev. Jesse Jackson. For the record, our organization is non-partisan. Jackson received the most support in our poll of all the candidates, but this does not constitute an endorsement from the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy.

As our poll indicates, the strength of Jackson and noncandidate Edward Kennedy (who together received the support of 51 percent of those polled) points to disenchantment with the "mainstream" candidates. That almost all Puerto Rican political elites, particularly in New York City, have ignored this reality and uncreatively joined the Mondale bandwagon is a signal that this

elite, as a whole, is greatly out of touch with the community it supposedly represents. This lack of pluralism among elected Puerto Rican officials, and their selling, in a sense, of our community so cheaply to the Democratic Party establishment is not a new development, but one we expect will become increasingly untenable.

In These Times was one of very few North American newspapers even to have noted that a poll on Puerto Rican opinion on the presidential race was conducted. This poll, a first for our community, was a way to inject the views of the more than two million Puerto Ricans in the U.S. and more than three million in Puerto Rico into this national political debate. Your coverage, limited though it was, has been helpful.

—Angelo Falcon
Director, Institute for
Puerto Rican Policies, Inc.
New York

CHOICES

WHY HAS *IN THESE TIMES* CHOSEN to ignore the trial of Kathy Boudin?

A former member of the Weather Underground, Boudin is now standing trial in Westchester County, New York. She is charged with felony murder in connection with an attempted robbery of a Brinks' armored truck in Nyack, N.Y., two and a half years ago.

Boudin has spent many years of her life struggling against injustice and oppression in this country. Few of us have made the choices she has made. Many of us abhor her involvement in acts that resulted in the deaths of one Brinks guard and two policemen. But she began where many of us also began, and she is a person and she is in prison. How can we claim to be in solidarity with any national or international cause or group if we abandon political activists because we do not endorse their methods? Surely a newspaper with a commitment to providing coverage of world and national events from a socialist perspective has a responsibility to inform its readers of this trial.

There are serious questions to consider which go beyond our opinions about the events at Nyack. There is concern about whether Boudin's and other's civil rights are being violated by the "special treatment" that she has received in the jails where she has been held. The government has taken extreme security measures that may cause prospective

jurors to believe that the defendants are indeed terrorists as the state has claimed. The isolation within prison that Boudin suffered for the first two years of her confinement and the lack of a humane atmosphere for prison visits with her young child are all unnecessary punishments.

A basic tenet of our system of justice is at issue. Is justice administered evenhandedly or can the government choose to create special cases? Is the accused truly considered innocent until proven guilty?

—Lynn Thomas Strauss
David Strauss
—Oak Park, Ill.

CORRECTION

IN LAST WEEK'S ISSUE, ROBERT GUMPERT should have been credited for the photograph of a steelworker appearing on page 4.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SEVERAL SUBSCRIBERS HAVE WRITTEN to us wondering how they can order rock critic Dave Marsh's newsletter *Rock and Roll Confidential* (*ITT*, March 21). The address is Duke and Duchess Ventures, Dept. 6, Box 1073, Naywood, NJ 07607. A year's subscription costs \$15.00.

LEMING'S CORNER

A long time soul searching

By Warren Leming

FOR THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS I've been drinking over at Max's on Racine Avenue. Every once in a while Joe Bernardin pops in for a quick one; nothing more; no hanky-panky. Joe's what they call a prelate of the Church. In Chicago, that means he's the Cardinal of the archdiocese. Friday night he comes in and I buy him one and congratulate him on the Bishops' Letter in favor of world peace.

"Yeah," Joe smiles, "it was a tough one. One thousand nine hundred eighty-four years of soul-searching and deliberation. The Church does not just jump on any bandwagon."

Joe mentioned that the Pope had also spoken out in favor of world peace.

"What's he like?" I asked.

"Who?" said Joe.

"You know," I replied, "the Pope."

Joe looked up and down the bar and said quietly: "Let's not get into the infallibility thing, all right?"

I made a remark about Gallileo and Joe looked mildly amused. "I must have heard that one a million times," he said, looking into his beer.

I'm a student of the Inquisition, but I can tell he doesn't want to get into that one either. So we just stare at the bartender for a while and then Joe says, "You know, I came up the hard way: altarboy, choirboy and now this. They don't call me 'boy' anymore, I'll tell you. I paid my dues like everyone else, but in all that time I've never known the Pope to be wrong about anything. Hesitant, sure; wrong, never."

But I can tell Joe's feeling a little down. "So what's really on your mind, huh?" I ask him. "Come on."

"You really want to know?"

"Sure," I say. "Spill it."

"The destruction of the world and everyone in it."

"All right, look," I say. "The Church has taken sides; but does God take sides?"

"Of course, He takes sides."

"Why?"

"Because He's a team player," Joe says.

"All right, if God is on your side, how could DePaul blow it to Dayton in the last minute of the game? The last minute."

"God works in mysterious ways, right?"

"So?"

"And hasn't it been prophesied that all of this shall pass away? Doesn't it say that?"

"What are you getting at?"

Joe loosened his collar a bit and then said quietly, "Doesn't it strike you as significant that the phrase 'blown away' does not occur biblically?"

"I never thought about that," I tell him.

"Don't think that this peace movement is just another campaign," he says. "We are working on the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Do you follow me? Remember, if He who is already once risen is to come again, we are going to have to work like crazy to insure that there is something for Him to come to. Am I right?"

"Absolutely."

"I've got a tough day tomorrow—I'll see you later," said Joe.

Just as Joe left Mac came over and said, "Jesus, who'd want that job?" I had to agree.

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PERSPECTIVES

Mexico plays down Gen. Gorman slur

By A.B. Magil

WHEN GEN. PAUL Gorman, chief of the Panama-based U.S. Southern Command, which includes Central America (but not Mexico), told the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 23 that Mexico had the "most corrupt government and society in all of Central America," that Mexico City is "the center for subversion throughout Central America," and that our southern neighbor could become "the number one security problem" for the U.S. in the next decade, he opened a can of worms that could have proved a messy embarrassment for Washington.

Luckily for the Reagan administration, the Mexican government, for reasons of its own, chose to cool it. The country's media, which customarily take their cue from the government, obliged: not a single Spanish-language newspaper or television or radio station reported the general's comments. Mexico's relations with Washington are delicate in several areas, and rather than let public indignation erupt, the government chose to limit protests to diplomatic channels. Luke-warm disavowals soon followed from the State Department and the Pentagon.

In this carefully orchestrated tactic the Mexican government made one excep-

tion. It evidently saw no reason to shield the country's large American community from its resentment. And so *Mexico City News*, an English-language daily owned and published by the newspaper *Novedades*, devoted its page-one lead story on February 25 to a UPI dispatch quoting not only Gorman, but the sharp reply of Agustin Gutierrez Canet, a member of the Foreign Relations Secretariat.

Gutierrez Canet described Gorman's statement as "an interference in the internal affairs of Mexico," and heaped scorn on the general's ignorance in placing Mexico in Central America. Another official pointed out: "The argument that Mexico could constitute the number one security threat to the U.S. presents a danger to the security of Mexico. It is with this argument that the United States could assume the right to intervene in our country." And in a lengthy editorial, *Mexico City News* took pains to remind its readers that the only invasion suffered by Mexico in this century was by the U.S. in April 1914, and that in an earlier U.S. invasion (1846-48), "Mexico lost half its territory, one of the biggest and most blatant land grabs in history."

Gutierrez Canet noted that country's economic, social and political problems are not the same as those of Central America, but he added significantly: "Central America is fighting now for what Mexico has already fought for, and this is the difference between the Mexican reality and the Central American revolution."

By associating itself with the general aims of the Central American revolution, Mexico is affirming that regardless of who happens to be president, in its external relations (especially where Latin America is concerned) the tide of its own revolution hasn't ebbed. Outstanding examples have been its strong support of Cuba and the Allende government in Chile, and the refuge it has provided for exiles from Latin American dictatorships. This policy is more than sentiment and tradition. At its core is self-interest: Mexico's need for allies in its relations with "the colossus of the North."

After a month in Mexico, I was impressed that the level of support for beleaguered Nicaragua and the Salvadoran insurgents has risen since a year ago. So has criticism of the Reagan Central American policy. Activities of committees in behalf of Nicaragua and the Salvadoran struggle are of course nothing new. What is new is the launching in February in the city of Tlaxcala by

an ideologically diverse group of a national movement of resistance to U.S. military interventionism in Central America. Organizers of the movement include senators and deputies of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and of the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM), whose main component is the former Communist Party, as well as academics and trade union leaders. The wide spectrum of opinion to which this movement is appealing is indicated by editorials in conservative dailies, like the one in *Novedades* headlined "A Repugnant Policy," excoriating U.S. policy in Central America. This editorial warned that "preparations are being made for the El Salvador government at an appropriate moment to 'request' the direct assistance of U.S. forces in its territory."

Undoubtedly an important factor in shaping public sentiment has been Mexico's role in the Contadora group in which it has joined with Panama, Venezuela and Colombia in pressing the alternative of negotiated solutions to Central American problems. The U.S. media give the impression that Contadora (its name is taken from the Panamanian island where its first meeting was held in January 1983) is moribund—at best a well-meaning gesture pitting itself against the power of the Reagan administration. Not so. Contadora is very much alive and has begun to attract support from other Latin American countries including Argentina and Ecuador.

In his first news conference for the foreign press in early February, President Miguel de la Madrid said, "I pray...that the U.S. will become convinced that a military intervention, far from solving the problem, would worsen it and spread it, not only in Central America, but throughout the American continent." In contrast to the Reagan rhetoric depicting Cuba, manipulated by the USSR, as the villain of the piece, de la Madrid said that "on many occasions Commander Castro has helped the peace efforts of this group of nations [Contadora] and has expressed his willingness to comply with the agreements Central American nations would freely reach."

Problems at home.

The flip side of the coin, the Mexican domestic situation, is another matter. The government estimates last year's inflation at about 80 percent and hopes to reduce it to 40 percent in 1984. Both figures are probably too low. Clemente Ruiz Duran of the University of Mexico postgraduate economics faculty believes that increased food costs will drive inflation past the 100 percent mark this year. (The prices of basic items rose 8.6 percent in January.) Nezahualcoyotl de la Vega, deputy leader of the Mexican Workers Confederation (CTM), told the organization's recent national convention that in 1983 the minimum wage lost 72 percent of its purchasing power. Other wages, he said, despite increases, lagged far behind spiraling living costs. And for the millions of unemployed, underemployed and landless peasants the trough of misery has no bottom.

At the same time, business bankruptcies are on a roller-coaster because of the severe contraction of domestic and foreign markets. One export "market" is, however, expanding: the interest payments on Mexico's huge foreign debt. That debt has grown from \$80 billion in 1982 to \$89 billion currently—a sum second only to Brazil's \$93 billion. While the U.S. and West European creditor banks have agreed to allow Mexico to postpone amortization of principal, interest continues at the high rates of the past. This

means that new loans are required to help Mexico meet payments which last year totaled some \$15 billion, equal to nearly one-third of the national budget.

Austerity measures exacted by the International Monetary Fund and the creditor banks have reduced public expenditures and living standards and thrown the country into an economic tailspin. But tourism, which last year shot up by an unprecedented 24 percent, is continuing to expand, though at a slower pace.

Corruption.

At the same time, Mexicans read and hear about the fantastic corruption under the preceding administration of Jose Lopez Portillo. The meager achievements of the present government's campaign against corruption—the "moral renovation" promised by de la Madrid when he was running for president—feed cynicism and resentment. Senator Jorge Diaz Serrano, who is charged with reaping millions of dollars while he was Lopez Portillo's director of Pemex, the state-owned oil monopoly, has been imprisoned while awaiting trial. Two or three minor officials are also being prosecuted. Most publicized has been the case of former Mexico City Police and Traffic Chief Arturo Durazo, who managed—or was allowed—to escape abroad after stealing millions. He left behind several mansions, the most resplendent of which, built in classic Greek style and known as "the Parthenon," adorns the Pacific resort of Zihuatenejo and has become a tourist attraction. Nevertheless, the legal proceedings against Durazo have developed with extraordinary lassitude.

Governmental corruption is usual in Mexico, yet the scale of official speculation in the Lopez Portillo administration appears to have been exceptional, surpassing even that of the Miguel Aleman government (1946-52). And the press repeatedly turns the spotlight on the ex-president himself, who is said to have amassed a great fortune. At the end of his term in December 1982 Lopez Portillo went abroad, first to Rome and later to Madrid where, his wife having left him, he lived in lonely luxury. His prestige sank so low that when he appeared in public in Madrid, Mexican tourists are reported to have jeered him.

By contrast, President de la Madrid is regarded as honest, though he is a conservative technocrat who understands the discourse of high finance much better than the language of the impoverished and needy. In the midst of assurances that the economic crisis was under control, the government dropped a bombshell: foreign investment, previously excluded from a few areas and limited elsewhere to 49 percent ownership of an enterprise (though often circumvented in practice), would now be permitted up to 100 percent ownership in 34 industrial activities. Government officials had discovered a new "flexibility" in the 1973 Foreign Investment Law that made legislative action unnecessary. The welcome mat to foreign capital would be spread in areas that include heavy capital goods manufacturing, electronic equipment and accessories, transportation material and equipment, laboratory instrumentation, advanced biotechnological services and hotel construction and operation.

The new ruling has set off considerable controversy. It appears to be a move of desperation. Rather than advancing economic health, it is seen by analysts as a step toward further diluting Mexico's economic independence and sovereignty.

A.B. Magil is the former executive editor of *New Masses* and was a *Daily Worker* correspondent in Mexico.

Criticism of Reagan's Central American policy and support for Nicaragua have increased over the last year. Mexico's role in the Contadora group has helped shape public attitudes.

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By Roberta Manning

This is the first of a two-part series on the Soviet economy.

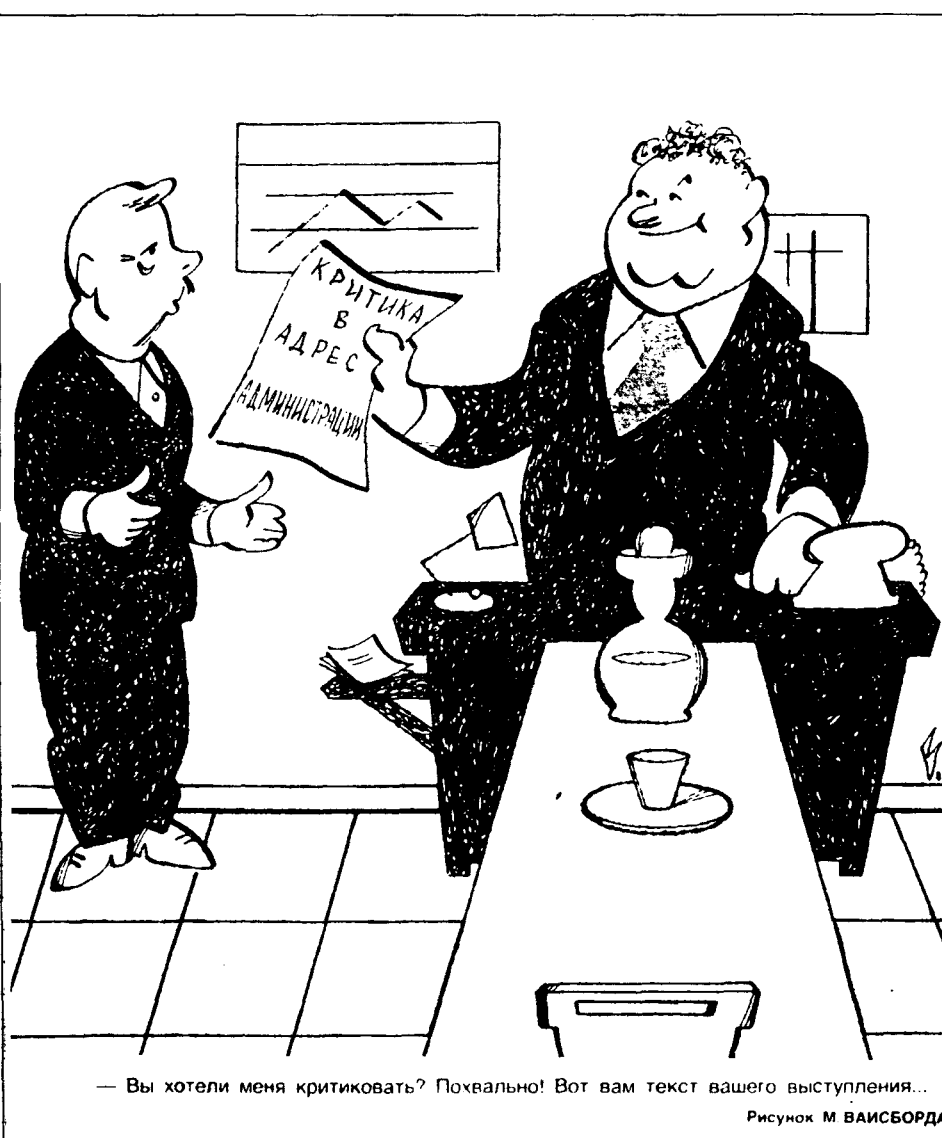
YURI ANDROPOV'S DEATH and his replacement by Brezhnev associate Nikolai Chernenko prompted more of the clichés that have stifled intelligent public discourse about the USSR for more than a decade. Continuing to portray the Soviet system as "stagnant," "aging" and "immobile," media commentators have overlooked major policy initiatives, undertaken toward the end of last year, to restructure the Soviet economic system along dramatically different lines.

The growing attention given economic reform by the increasingly outspoken Soviet press has been misinterpreted as evidence of an unfolding economic crisis in the USSR, when actually the Soviet economy has simply grown too large to be planned from the center, with Soviet industrial and agricultural output approaching 85-90 percent of present U.S. levels. Each successive five year plan has proven more difficult to compile as the number of products and economic balances has continued to proliferate. The target figures for the 11th Five Year Plan (1981-1985) were only available for all enterprises many months after the "plan" had officially begun. Problems of planning have been compounded by pluralistic tendencies within the Soviet political system that have substantially expanded the number of conflicting interest groups consulted in the drafting of economic plans—and by growing resentment and resistance on the part of local forces to central direction. Work on some mammoth construction sites has recently been halted for several months on end, as local engineers and workers refused to follow outmoded or unsuitable construction plans drawn up in Moscow and insisted on their right to compile their own updated work plans.

Economists, planners and local political figures have emerged among the more outspoken advocates of far-reaching changes in the economic and political apparatus of the Soviet state, established during the First Five Year Plan 55 years ago. The main thrust of current reform efforts is in the direction of economic decentralization. The powerful central economic ministries, which have directed the national economy from Moscow since the end of the '20s, will lose some of their prerogatives through the devolution of economic decision-making powers to more locally based economic institutions: economic enterprises; local governing bodies (whose powers have been repeatedly beefed up in recent years); inter-branch associations with authority that cuts across ministerial lines; and economic trusts, composed of several local factories and research institutions, possessing sufficient internal resources to allow them to function independently from their parent ministries. Within economic enterprises, small work units will assume some of the powers of lower level managerial personnel, organizing their own work and reaping the benefits of increased production.

Key elements of these reforms were introduced on a piecemeal basis under Brezhnev. But their implementation has been hindered by powerful interests within the Soviet political system. Until recently, Soviet trade unions and many ordinary workers were among the opponents of reform because they feared losing benefits and, in some cases, their jobs. Under local control, certain factories would have to cut back excesses in their labor forces—a major source of inefficiency in the labor-short Soviet economy. Such factors were certainly at issue in the abortive Kosygin reforms of 1965 and the Shchekino experiments of the '70s.

Such cutbacks were particularly threatening in the older and more politically influential Soviet factories, some of which had played prominent roles in the Russian Revolution. These factories provide their workforces with the impressive array of trade union-administered benefits



PERSPECTIVES

Change is under way in the USSR

and social services, built up over decades, that are a major source of economic inequality within Soviet society. These benefits are jealously guarded. The position of the unions, which are represented on key committees that run the Soviet economy and political system at every level in these days of across-the-board collective leadership, has been reinforced by developments in Soviet labor law. Since the death of Stalin, it has become difficult for firms to dismiss workers, with Soviet courts tending to rule in cases of dismissals in favor of the workers, as the well documented studies of Mary McAuley and Blair Ruble have shown.

Last December in what may prove to be a major breakthrough, the Commun-

The current political climate could produce surprising results as new leaders come to power.

ist Party Central Committee seems to have found a way to reconcile job security, economic autonomy and efficiency. An "economic experiment" was authorized to begin early this year in five key industrial ministries. The number of economic directives issued from above to the enterprises involved in the "experiment" was sharply reduced. These enterprises have also been given the freedom, without having to resort to time-consuming central authorization, to produce new commodities from waste products, raw materials allotted them by the current five year plan, and their existing labor force so long as they also fulfill their planned deliveries of output to other firms and

trade organizations. Profits from these new ventures are to be retained by the enterprise and used as the latter sees fit—for further investment and for bonuses and social services for the plant's workforce.

Unlike previous attempts at reform, the Central Committee moved to create near "hothouse" conditions for its "experiment." Firms involved have been guaranteed the supplies allotted them by the Five Year Plan on a priority basis. In this way, these firms will be freed from the usual supply bottlenecks plaguing the Soviet economy, which have undermined earlier reform efforts. More limited attempts to increase local autonomy and encourage firms to find "hidden reserves" and put them to use have enjoyed notable success, allowing the Soviet Union at present to produce more than three times the number of industrial robots produced in the U.S. (10,700 in 1983, compared to 3,200 for the U.S.)—even though industrial robots were not included in the original draft of the current five year plan.

Managerial corruption and abuses, which might easily develop under conditions of autonomy, are to be curbed by enhanced powers for workplace collectives, the general assemblies of an enterprise's workforce. The powers of the collectives, which have always existed in some form, have been considerably expanded by a new law adopted last August. This law gave workplace collectives a voice in the formulation of economic plans for their enterprises and in monitoring the work of the plant's management, which is required to report regularly on its activities to the collective and to consult the collective on the appointment of managerial personnel.

The collectives also have been enlisted in the struggle for economic reforms, which directly threaten the prerogatives of the central industrial ministries and lower and middle level managers. Man-

"You want to criticize me? Splendid! Here's the text of your speech..."

agers have repeatedly dragged their feet in introducing reforms, with the blessing of their parent ministries, or they have taken action to implement reforms "only on paper," e.g. by creating "brigades" or "links" that do not actually work together. In response, the top party leadership in recent months has appealed to rank-and-file Communists to participate actively in the work collectives in order to force the implementation of the reforms and hold executives accountable.

Industrial Party cells are in a position to play such a role, thanks to post-Stalinist Party recruiting policies. Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, a Communist Party composed predominantly of officials has been transformed into a party more representative of society at large, though massive recruitment of urban and rural professionals and factory workers, especially the better-educated, more highly skilled workers. At present one-third of all skilled industrial workers are Party members, and the proportion of "workers at the bench" in the Party, i.e., workers by occupation rather than workers who have been promoted to administrative positions, stands above 43 percent, the highest level since the late '20s.

Under these conditions, work collectives might assume some of the prerogatives of the USSR's long-defunct factory committees, the grassroots workers' organizations of the Russian Revolution. At any rate, these institutions bear watching. So far, the work collectives have played an important role in "Andropov's" crackdown on official corruption and efforts to combat absenteeism and alcoholism in the workplace, relying on the pressures of public opinion of one's co-workers rather than the pressures of the marketplace. This component to "Andropov's" reforms has helped render them highly popular, as the Western mass media has belatedly recognized.

In recent months, workplace collectives have been repeatedly called upon by top Soviet leaders and the press to combat managerial abuses and resistance to economic reforms. Once thus activated, rank-and-file workers, even those with Party cards, might not be willing to return passively to the *status quo ante*, even were this the game plan of the politburo. More than once before in Soviet history, participatory institutions, endowed with democratic forms, have actually—if only temporarily—begun to function in a democratic manner to the dismay of many officials, as the new American and British social historians of the Soviet '20s and '30s are beginning to discover.

Today, however, the high rates of social mobility that prevailed in the early Soviet period (due to the advancement of bureaucracy's critics into the higher levels of that bureaucracy) have since declined because of the professionalization of the Soviet economic managers and Party and state officials, who now hold college degrees at all levels of administration. Moreover, the Soviet working class today, thanks to the introduction of universal high school education in the '70s, is far better educated than the rank-and-file workers of the Stalin era, who had on the average no more than third grade educations (a deficiency they shared with a large proportion of officials).

The current political climate could foster surprising results, particularly as a younger generation of Soviet leaders begins to come to political power at the national level. In recent months, the press has increasingly called for "the perfection of socialist democracy" and made denunciations of "formalism" of meetings run according to "prepared scenarios," of the stifling of rank-and-file criticism and of leaders who do not listen to people and take public opinion into account.

Whatever is happening in the USSR, it is obvious that our media need a new vocabulary. "Stagnant" and "immobile" will no longer suffice.

Roberta Manning teaches Russian history at Boston College.

IN PRINT

HISTORY

Communist caricature



The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade

By Harvey Klehr
Basic Books, 511 pp. \$26.50

By Maurice Isserman

In *The Roots of American Communism*, published in 1957, Theodore Draper argues that the essential character of American Communism was fixed in the early '20s. The Party's periodic attempts to "Americanize" itself "corresponded to the fluctuations of Russian policy [not to] a compelling need within the American Communists themselves."

Draper's two volumes on the American Communist Party's history in the '20s, *The Roots of American Communism* and *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), were originally intended as the prologue to a book carrying the story through the Depression years, but he abandoned the project after doing much of the research for it and writing the introductory chapters.

Harvey Klehr, a political scientist at Emory University, has picked up where Draper left off, drawing on Draper's archives and unpublished chapters, and freely acknowledging his intellectual debt. Klehr's conclusion in *The Heyday of American Communism* echoes Draper. In the '30s, as in the '20s, "the Party's lurches were not in response to any internal changes in Ameri-

can society or the Party itself, but reflected the pull of an external force.... American Communists always strove to provide what the Comintern wanted, no more, no less.... It all depended on what was required by Moscow. To pretend otherwise is to misunderstand and distort the history of American Communism and to miss the essential clue about its nature."

Klehr's book shares some virtues of Draper's predecessor volumes. It is carefully researched and clearly written. In his preface Klehr informs the reader where he's headed ("In all periods of Party history, the ultimate source of Party policy was the Soviet Union") and proceeds to marshal an impressive amount of detail to support his case.

Just as no one has been able to write about American Communism in the '20s without having Draper's two volumes close at hand, likewise *The Heyday of American Communism* will claim equal consideration from anyone trying to make sense of the Communist movement in the '30s.

Unfortunately, some of Draper's virtues don't wear as well in Klehr's account. Draper is a miniaturist. His portrait of American Communism is an accumulation of tiny brush strokes, revealing the gradual subordination of American Communist leaders in the '20s to complete Soviet control.

There is an extraordinary moment in *American Communism*

and *Soviet Russia* when William Z. Foster is forced to repudiate his life-long opposition to dual unionism in order to stay abreast of the latest shift in the Comintern's line. Draper's careful preparations for this scene allow the reader to see Foster as, at one and the same time, a tragic and contemptible figure. Draper's account rarely ventures out of a few tiny smoke-filled rooms in New York and Moscow, but this serves him well, revealing the cramped character of the faction-ridden and marginal Communist movement of the '20s.

Klehr has inherited Draper's tiny paint brush, but he is so preoccupied with his own precise strokes that he never notices that he is working on one corner of a 50-foot canvas.

Klehr does prove what he sets out to prove: in the '30s, as in the '20s, Communist leaders were in constant consultation with Moscow over strategy and tactics. In any conflict between Soviet goals and the domestic well-being of American Communism, "loyalty to the Soviet Union took precedence." To Klehr, that is all that needs to be said:

"The Party could encourage strikes or discourage them, talk in ultra-revolutionary or ultra-reformist language, furiously denounce other left-wingers or assiduously court right-wingers with equal facility.... In the last analysis, one thing gave every Communist Party its specific character among radical movements—its special relationship to

the Soviet Union."

But there is something else that gave the CP "its specific character among radical movements" in the '30s—the remarkable expansion of its membership and influence in the latter half of the decade. It entered the '30s with fewer than 10,000 members, most of them foreign born. It had almost no influence in the union movement or in American politics. By the end of the '30s, Party membership had increased seven- or eight-fold, with a majority of its members native-born. And it had become a significant force in the new industrial unions and in political life in New York, California, Washington and some other states.

To say that all this was "in the last analysis" the product of decisions made in Moscow is not the most interesting part of the story. There were, after all, plenty of other leftists around in the '30s who didn't need to get their political lines approved in Moscow, including "Old Guard" and "Militant" socialists, Trotskyists, Musteites and Wobblies. None of them enjoyed a fraction of the Communists' success. It is easy to understand why the CP stagnated in the early '30s under the burden of the ultra-sectarianism imposed on it by the Comintern. What needs to be explained is why the CP did so well once that burden was lifted.

Klehr's myopia is most obvious in a passage on the origins of the Popular Front. The story has often been told, and all he needed to do was retell it in his own words and list the proper citations. The account Klehr drew from was Daniel Brower's *The New Jacobins, the French Communist Party and the Popular Front* (1968), which was a good choice. In February 1934 French fascists launched a series of street riots hoping to undermine the Republic. The French Communist Party (PCF), holding fast to the approved "Third Period" line, refused to cooperate with the Socialists to oppose the fascists, asserting (in Klehr's account):

"[T]he only way to defeat [fascism] was to institute a united front from below, tearing the Socialist workers away from their leaders. Finally, on June 24 the Comintern sent the Party a telegram ordering unity with the Socialists 'at any price' and even sent along a draft unity agreement that included a provision forbidding criticism by either party of the other. Within days, the French Popular Front was under way."

Moscow ordered a new policy, the French Communists obeyed and Communists around the world followed their example. But if you turn to the source that Klehr cites, you discover that wasn't the whole story.

Brower's account does show that the French Communist leaders refused to abandon their "united front from below" line until they got the go-ahead from Moscow. But he goes on to show how a "sizeable fraction of the membership" of the PCF ignored the official line and joined with Socialists in huge demonstrations opposing fascism. Three months before the Comintern decided that left-wing unity was desirable, there was "widespread insubordination" within the ranks of the PCF, with "local Communist cells...acting completely on their own initiative" in making overtures to the Socialists.

To Klehr the only fact worth mentioning is that the top leaders of the PCF would not budge until

pushed from Moscow. But at the lower levels of the PCF, the need to defend the Republic against its enemies proved to have a stronger appeal than the need to obey the official Party line.

There were similar tensions in the U.S. between the pulls of Bolshevik discipline and political realism. As early as 1932 Communist college students were reaching out to (or huddling together with) their socialist counterparts in common political enterprises. Hal Draper, a socialist student leader in the early '30s, would write many years later that the young Communist leaders of the National Student League (NSL) were: "more imaginative and less muscle-bound in style than the cliché-ridden hacks who presided over other Communist Party enterprises in the earlier years. In a real sense the NSL pioneered the Popular Front pattern."

Young people joining the CP in the early '30s would become the most important organizers of Popular Front activities in the later '30s, and carried with them a style and a set of concerns that marked them off from older Communists.

Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, whose book *The American Communist Party, A Critical History* (1957) is as unsympathetic to the CP as *The Heyday of American Communism*, make some effort to explain the personal motivations of people who joined the Party, even going so far as to write: "No matter how hostile one may be toward the politics of these young Communists, honesty requires the admission that some of them were among the best of their generation, among the most intelligent, selfless and idealistic."

But Klehr's Communists are either *apparatchiks* or dupes. They stride through his pages as caricatures of human beings (i.e., "One lovelorn Party member wrote *The Daily Worker* asking if cadres could have a personal life").

Klehr is entitled to his own opinion of the Communists, but without accounting for their personal motivations, outlook or qualities, he is left without much explanation for the appeal of Communism in the late '30s.

Why did the Spanish Civil War bring the CP so many recruits? Klehr devotes two short paragraphs to the question. Why did the fear of anti-Semitism bring the CP so many recruits? Klehr devotes one unenlightening sentence to the question ("The Popular Front policy had enabled Jewish Communists to parade as the staunchest opponents of Nazism"). Nowhere does he offer any explanation why Communists (and many non-Communists) in the '30s regarded the Soviet Union as "the future that works."

The Heyday of American Communism is a defense not only of the traditional interpretation of its subject, but also of a traditional method of inquiry. The recent works of oral history and autobiography by American Communists do not impress Klehr:

"Many of the Communists and ex-Communists who have testified, written or been interviewed about their experiences over the years have exaggerated, distorted facts or simply misled their audiences. In writing about American Communism, a prudent researcher must attempt to check written records to confirm individual recollections."

There are occasions, however,

Continued on page 22

Giant Steps
By Kareem Abdul-Jabbar &
Peter Knobler
Bantam, 324 pp., \$14.95

By Lester Rodney

Autobiographies of sports stars tend to be shallow and in-offensive. It's as if the publishers advise the athlete and his writer-helper that the potential buyers are mostly the young and the perpetually young—those who dutifully sipper "charge" five times an inning at the command of an electronic scoreboard or wave big "We're Number One" plastic fingers at the camera for their number 27 team.

There have been exceptions, notably the sophisticated book by former basketball star Bill Bradley, now a U.S. senator. But with *Giant Steps*, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar raises sports-star autobiography to a new height. Woven through the usual selling point of a book by a celebrity—intimate details of his life—we get a vivid account of the development of a black viewpoint in the American mosaic.

Quickly, for the 25 percent of *In These Times* readers who might not know Abdul-Jabbar from an Arabian skin lotion: he was the dominant basketball player of his time. Born Lew Alcindor in New York, he grew to 7 feet, 2 inches and became great through hard work, athleticism and intelligence. (Contrary to what non-sports fans might think, height alone does not a basketball star make.)

He led his high school team and then UCLA to a string of national championships. Today a balding veteran of too many professional seasons and nearing the end of his playing career, he will be 37 when he leads the Los Angeles Lakers into this season's playoffs for the NBA championship, making him the second oldest player in the grueling game.

Abdul-Jabbar is not one of the semi-literate black athletes who are exploited by a college for their valuable skills and move on to the pros—if they are in the lucky minority of college players who do—without having received an education. The only child of middle-class parents (he remembers having his own room to retreat to as a factor in shaping his personality), young Lew Alcindor was a quick reader and learner. Although he grew up in one of Manhattan's better interracial housing projects, black awareness came early and inevitably. "I'd been more inclined to play with someone who was friendly than someone who was black," he writes. "And I never felt I was black until I was made to."

That kind of education came in many forms: a supermarket manager's demeaning attitude toward his mother; a dear white friend succumbing to the racism of the adult world; a high school coach he liked suddenly using the "nigger" stereotype with him in a bit of cheap psychology.

Inner anger prompted an excessively private outer demeanor, which led some sports writers to regard him as sullen and uncooperative during his UCLA career. Those were the sports writers he did not trust and did not open up to. A few, including a socially aware, non-patronizing sports writer at the newspaper I worked for in Southern California, got the good stories from Kareem.

He writes of an encounter one day at his Catholic high school—which, Kareem recalls, had only one black teacher. A religious

brother stopped him in the hall to inquire about a lapel pin he was wearing. It showed a black fist holding a torch with the words "Freedom now."

He writes, "'It's from SNCC,' I told him. 'Snick?' he said, 'Oh, I thought it was your honor roll button.' Better, I wanted to say, but I didn't have the nerve."

He was in 11th grade when a bomb killed three small black girls in a Birmingham church. The event affected him profoundly. "I knew in my gut that they would get away with it, that nobody cared about black people but black people.... The liberals? They had money but no power and it wasn't their ass on the line, so how far could you trust them? God certainly wasn't stepping in..."

This young man's rage did not consume him. It fueled a seething desire to learn more. He walked around Harlem to see things for himself. "Who owned these tenements, these roach-infested, cold-water rat traps. White people...." He saw the discrepancy in food prices and quality in the stores. Who controlled the jobs; he wondered, who was making money selling wine to the guys sitting around on the stoops?

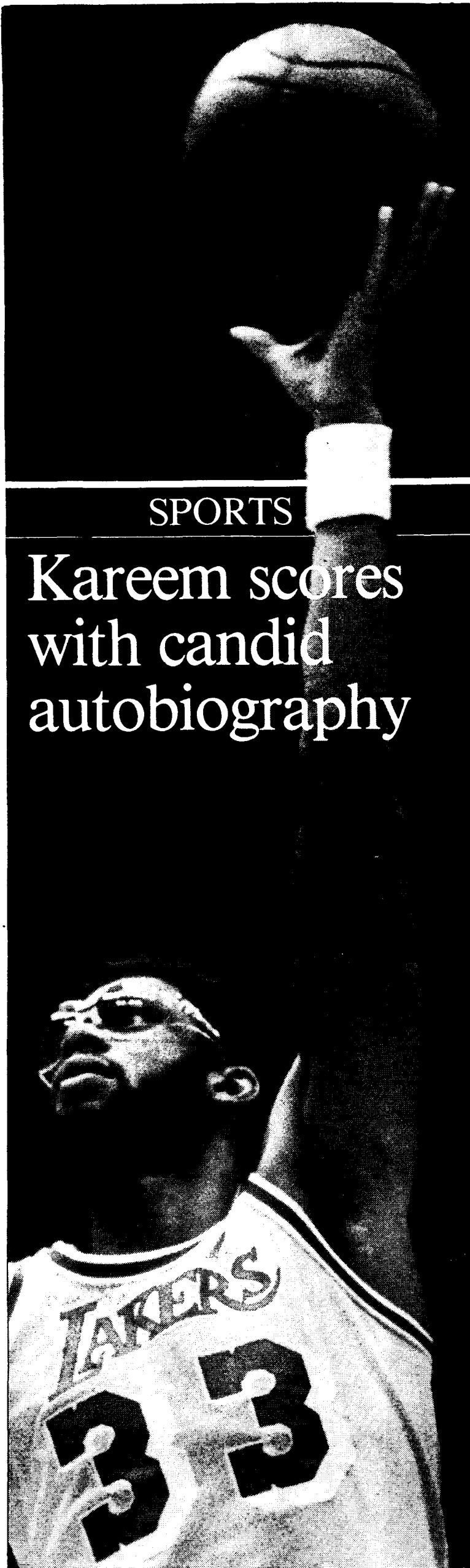
He found a "revelation warehouse" in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, part of the New York public library system, but uniquely all black. It was, he says, "full of exactly the information I wanted and needed but never knew where to find." Enthralled, he read W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey, the poetry of Countee Cullen, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Langston Hughes. "I found there was so much I didn't know, had never been taught or even told existed. The Harlem Renaissance—what a vital time, and no one had ever mentioned it to me."

Obviously, this is more than a "sports" book. Yet sports has been the framework of his life. Kareem pulls no punches in answering precisely the questions fans would want answered: who his favorite players are, black and white; why he uncharacteristically punched one out in the pros; why he switched from Catholicism to Islam and changed his name; and why he believes the collegiate rule barring the slam dunk (rescinded 10 years later) was racist and aimed directly at him. "If I'd been a white player they never would have done it."

He recalls in detail the major fuss during his UCLA years, when he declined to play for the Olympic team in 1968, his senior year. He opted instead to spend the summer on a volunteer project with black kids in New York. "If white America was going to treat blacks poorly," he says, "then white America could win the Olympics on its own." He was assailed by hate mail and called a traitor.

In an appearance on the *Today* TV show ostensibly to discuss the ghetto project he was working with, he was baited by sportscaster Joe Garagiola ("something less than a political genius," Kareem notes). When Garagiola said Kareem was an American and lived here and should obey the Olympics call, Kareem (in a formulation he was later to rethink) replied, "Yeah, I live here, but it's not really my country." Garagiola said, "Well, then, there's really only one solution. Maybe you should move."

Kareem writes: "Here's Joe Garagiola telling me and mine to go back to Africa." He was "fiercely proud" of the two



Kareem writes: "I never felt I was black until I was made to."

black track stars who enraged much of the nation by giving the black power salute on the Olympic victory stand.

Even at high school age, this independently minded youngster was not one to be led supinely by parents, coaches or other advisors on the choice of a college. He could, of course, have gone anywhere. Shy and insecure in his personal relationships despite his outsized stature and fame, and/or because of it ("I was always hoping for some young lady to read my silence as sensitivity—I was a dreamer"), he wanted to

SPORTS

Kareem scores with candid autobiography

That is important."

While retaining a basic respect for Wooden, candid Kareem does not hesitate to criticize the sometimes haloed coach for what he saw as a serious human relations failing with a teammate.

Like his other schools, UCLA ultimately disappointed him. He got the early impression that not much was expected of him academically, "either because I was an athlete or because I was black, probably both." He cites the amazement of a teacher when he wrote a superior paper on the history of the American theater. Though he earned the good grades, his deepest interests were outside the classroom. When he discovered the autobiography of Malcolm X, "all I did the week I bought it was to go to class and come home and read it."

The author does not take the opportunity to make himself look better in selective retrospect. He admits to knee-jerk anti-Semitism at one stage, to falling in with a drug crowd for a while and to a self-righteous rigidity in his new religion, which led to callous insensitivity toward his mother at his wedding.

You cannot mistake Kareem's honesty, yet this matured angry man demonstrates some misperceptions. He's too hard on referees—the wrong enemies. When he writes, "I take more abuse than anyone in the NBA, out on the court I am my only defender," it's the old everyone-is-out-to-chop-down-the-big-guy syndrome speaking.

And he retains a vestigial, slightly paranoid attitude toward sports-writers when explaining why he wouldn't talk to "ignoramus" about his religion. "You didn't hear sportswriters discussing Protestantism with Jerry West [a white star]," he protests, displaying a common lack of understanding about what is newsworthy. He adds, "You never heard about how Mickey Mantle [white] might be a jerk, just that Juan Marichal [black] was a madman or Richie Allen [black] a bad guy. I had seen them do it to Wilt [Chamberlain] for years. Nothing he ever did was good enough."

Kareem is close to right about Wilt, but he couldn't be more wrong about the rest. Mantle has been amply described as less than brilliant or Little Lord Fauntleroy. Marichal did conk John Roseboro with a bat, which was kind of mad. Allen was a difficult character to manage. What Kareem tends to overlook here is individual responsibility for one's actions. I believe he is similarly wrong in his unconditional defense of Kermit Washington, who almost killed another player during a berserk moment.

Yet there is something refreshing about continuing angry candor from this hard-working millionaire. The fact is, the big man is still growing. Consider this observation about a phone conversation when he was trying to get a first date with the woman who eventually became his companion. "As voices over the phone, there was none of the physical intrusion there would have been if we'd been sitting and talking. On the line I was no disorienting giant.... For her, this was one time when she didn't have to deal with some guy's furtive staring at her body or taking the bedroom inventory."

Behind the goggles and emotionless mask, did any of us know the man before this book?

Lester Rodney was sports editor of the *Daily Worker*.

By Misha Berson

Can a left-wing theater collective born out of the political and artistic ferment of the '60s and '70s survive into the '80s? The answer is yes if it's the San Francisco Mime Troupe, the venerable performing ensemble that celebrates its 25th anniversary this year with a big new show about labor politics called *Steeltown*.

Since its inception in 1959, the Mime Troupe has not only survived but thrived, winning prestigious Obie awards, touring Europe, Latin America and the U.S. It is currently being considered for a glitzy Tony award as an "outstanding regional theater." Though the Troupe's audiences and admirers have steadily increased over the years, some still affix them with the limiting label of "cheerleaders of the left." Veteran company members don't mind that term, insisting that the left can use a little cheerleading these days.

"There's an inspirational quality to our survival," says Dan Chumley, who has acted and directed in the group for the past 16 years. "At a performance in New York recently a woman came up to us and said, 'You're like spring. Just when I'm feeling the worst I know that's when you'll come around to perform.'"

Though the political climate that informed its early work has changed, the Mime Troupe continues to create issue-oriented shows designed to entertain as well as provoke. In *Steeltown*, which recently opened in San Francisco and will tour the Midwest and East Coast this fall, they tackle a subject as immediate as today's headlines: the dilemma of steelworkers faced with layoffs and plant closures as big business seeks "new accommodations" with American labor. Though the subject is serious, the Troupe characteristically approaches it with an inviting blend of slapstick, music, satirical farce and agit-prop.

Steeltown, scripted primarily by Joan Holden, is the latest in a long line of Mime Troupe satiric musical fables. The Troupe's shows have explored feminist liberation (*The Independent Female* in 1970), black power politics (*Seize the Time*, also in 1970), the eviction of low income senior citizens from an inner city resident hotel (in *Hotel Universe*,

1977), U.S. policy in Central America (*Last Tango in Huahua-tenango*, 1981) and the nuclear arms race (*Factwino Meets Armageddonman*, 1982), to name but a few. But *Steeltown* is one of the few Mime Troupe shows that ends with a disturbing question mark rather than upbeat, "the-people-united-will-never-be-defeated" optimism.

"I wanted to do this play because plant closings and de-industrialization is the proof to me that capitalism doesn't work," remarked Joan Holden, the company's main writer since 1967. "There is a choice to be made by everybody as to whether we want our future in the hands of men like Reagan...or whether we want to take our future into our own hands. If people feel hopeless after this play, I will have failed terribly. What I want them to feel is the burden of that choice."

Posing political alternatives and encouraging people to act on them is the consistent theme running through the Mime Troupe's history. R.G. (Ronnie) Davis founded the group in 1959 as a boisterous alternative to the unchallenging mainstream theater of the era. The "Mime" in their name never referred to Marcel Marceau-style silent whiteface: "Mime is the point of departure for our style" wrote Davis, "in which words sharpen and refine, but the substance of meaning is in action."

Drawing inspiration from the bawdy, irreverent style of *commedia dell'arte* (a rambunctious improvisational genre associated with 18th-century Italian theater), Davis fashioned original skits and grafted topical themes onto excavated *commedia* classics. Davis' other great influence was the German political dramatist Bertolt Brecht, and Davis interpreted epic Brecht plays in his own idiosyncratic fashion. His 1970 version of Brecht's rarely produced *Congress of the White Washers*, for example, was done in a Chinese Opera mode.

Cultural revolution.

The Mime Troupe began at a propitious time, on the cusp of the emerging San Francisco hippie-radical scene. Davis invited dozens of inventive performers, writers, filmmakers and musicians to participate, and many of them later made their own marks on the burgeoning "cultural rev-

olution." Composer Steve Reich became a leading light in the new music scene, Saul Landau went on to produce major films and actor Peter Coyote served as chairman of the California Arts Council under Gov. Jerry Brown and has recently starred in Hollywood movies *E.T.* and *Cross Creek*. Other Mime Troupers went on to form new ensembles that would revitalize California theater—Luis Valdez founded El Teatro Campesino as part of the farmworkers' movement, Larry Pisoni and Peggy Snider invented the Pickle Family Circus and director Jael Weisman was instrumental in the formation of the rural theater, Dell'Arte.

From the beginning Davis wanted his company to perform free in San Francisco's parks, and to this day they are there in the summertime passing the proverbial hat. But it's instructive to note that in 1965 Davis had to get arrested and wage a legal battle with city officials to gain the right to appear on public property. The American Civil Liberties Union defended Davis in court, and a series of defense fund benefits featuring the Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead and the Quicksilver Messenger Service launched Mime Troupe producer Bill Graham's meteoric career as rock impresario and proprietor of Fillmore East and West.

Brash, irreverent, but theatrically innovative and polished, the San Francisco Mime Troupe burst on the national scene in 1967—the year of San Francisco's fabled "Summer of Love." That year their *Minstrel Show*

(subtitled *Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel*) toured college campuses and was interrupted at a school in Washington state because it was considered "obscene." Their anti-war version of *L'Amant Militaire*, Joan Holden's adaptation of a *commedia* play by Carlo Goldoni, garnered a *Village Voice* Obie Award for the group. Writers in mainstream periodicals like the *London Times*, *Women's Wear Daily* and *Time* commented on the Troupe's political fervor and adventurous theatrics—sometimes with admiration, sometimes with derision.

In 1970 the Mime Troupe underwent an internal transformation like that which tested the mettle of many of the era's left groups. Some members wanted to collectivize the company, while others fought the move. The resulting rupture caused the departure of founder Davis. "Ronnie was our master," commented Joan Holden. "When we didn't want a master anymore he decided not to stay, but we never could have become who we are now without him."

At that point the new collective company's chances for survival were tenuous. Holden wrote her first original script, *The Independent Female*, one of her many experiments using popular American theater forms (in this case old-fashioned melodrama) to make the work more accessible. For the first time, the entire company collaborated on the script and inaugurated a system of "special previews" designed to elicit audience reaction and constructive criticism.

"At the preview for *Independent Female* we invited what seemed like the entire feminist movement," Holden recalled. "It was a disaster! There wasn't one laugh, just total silence. They trashed it. When I was criticized before by Ronnie or the actors I felt, rightly, that they knew vastly more than I did. Getting this political criticism was traumatic. In retrospect, they were right about a lot of things."

If its detractors had been completely right the show would have bombed, and Holden believes the Mime Troupe would then have quietly folded its tent. But the play was an enormous hit, and Holden (in collaboration with Peter Solomon, Andrea Snow, Jael Weisman, Robert Alexander and other writers) went on to concoct many more popular original plays, including *The Dragon Lady's Revenge* (a takeoff on Southeast Asian dope traders and the war in Vietnam that earned the group its second Obie) and the popular recent *Factwino/Factperson* series, with superheroes of clarification battling it

out with the nuclear war machine and the Moral Majority. (The *Factwino/Factperson* trilogy has been reprinted in its entirety in the journal *West Coast Plays*, and one of its scripts—*Factwino Meets the Moral Majority*—appeared in a 1982 issue of *The Humanist*.)

Along the way, the Troupe managed to finally obtain long overdue major funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council and the Hotel Tax Fund of the City of San Francisco. They have also finally begun to eke out a meagre living wage, with members now receiving the less-than-princely sum of between \$140 and \$175 per week for their intensive labors.

Another important turning point came in the mid-'70s when the predominantly white Troupe decided to seek out talented black and Hispanic theater artists for the company, resulting in a new multi-ethnic flavor in their scripts and the inclusion of reggae, rhythm and blues and mariachi music in their musical scores. (The Mime Troupe recently released a self-produced record of tunes from several shows.)

Industrial decay.

Perhaps the most important continuing achievement of the Mime Troupe has been its ability to translate immediate social issues into exciting theater. *Steeltown* is a case in point. When Tripp Mikich, the company's booking manager, suggested the idea of a play about lumber mills being closed down, Joan Holden rejected the concept as too dry. A bus ride through California's economically beleaguered Humboldt County changed her mind.

"I passed close-down milltown after closed-down milltown," she remembered. "I saw all these scenes on the street of unemployed men drinking, husbands and wives arguing. I thought, this is it! We have to do a play about this. By the end of the trip I decided it had to be about the steel industry. Steel is the primal symbol of the industrial decay of America."

Typically, *Steeltown* began with an intensive research period. The Troupe worked with the Plant Closures Project, an Oakland, Calif.-based group fighting steel mill closures, and they interviewed Steve Nichols and Rudy Quintero, labor activists from the troubled U.S. Steel plant in Pittsburg, Calif.

"First we learned a lot of statistics," said Holden, "and then we learned about the feelings [of the unemployed]." Holden was struck by the fact that after World War II "the American

ART«»ENTERTAINMENT

THEATER

Mime Troupe turns 25 with *Steeltown*, a saga of industrial decline



(l. to r.) Sharon Lockwood, Wilma Bonet, Audrey Smith.

Jeffrey Blankfort



The Mime Troupe faces the future.

labor movement chose not to continue the struggle of the '30s for mass organizing and social gains, for a whole lot of reasons—internal dynamics, red-baiting, the hierarchical structure of the CIO.... Workers who had led terrible lives were faced with the opportunity of good pay, pensions, health plans.... So there really wasn't any reason to look 40 years down the road to where we are today. What struck me was that where labor ceased to be the enemy of capital, capital became the nemesis of labor. I wanted to ask in the show, 'How did we get here?'"

Holden decided to set her play (as always, a musical satire) in both 1984 and 1945—boldly, in reverse of chronological order. For a historical perspective on unionism she relied on interviews with Stan Weir, a lifelong labor radical who publishes Singlejack Books in San Pedro, Calif. After Holden hammered out a first draft of *Steeltown*, the Troupe's actors, composers, designers and director Arthur Holden worked with her to shape the script and then bring it to life onstage. "The thing that's different at the Mime Troupe from most theaters," noted Arthur Holden, "is that the script is not the end of the process. There's nothing sacred about the text, ever. Everybody is involved in the creative process so that everyone has something at stake."

The Troupe is aiming to "play for labor audiences everywhere we can," Holden said. "In general, our plays have reflected the experience of people like ourselves, radicals somewhat outside the system. This is a play about workers and we want it to get the warmest response from those closest to it."

Steeltown previewed before

enthusiastic labor groups in Sacramento and Modesto before it officially opened at the Victoria Theater in San Francisco during March. Characteristically, the show will probably be revised many times before it goes on tour in California and the rest of the country. But the opening night performance promised that *Steeltown* would be the Troupe's biggest, most complex and ambitious show in years, an epic that

has been laid off by the mill and is a reluctant househusband, while Linda struggles to feed the family on one paycheck and to save her husband from alcoholism and despair.

The didactic realism in the first act of *Steeltown* doesn't quite gel, and the Troupe plans extensive rewrites as the San Francisco run progresses. But *Steeltown* really bursts into life in its second act, set in 1945 just as World War

STEELTOWN is one of the few Mime Troupe shows that ends with a disturbing question mark rather than an upbeat, "the-people-united-will-never-be-defeated" optimism.

covers decades of musical, dramatic and political territory.

The first act, set in 1984, offers a tragi-comic depiction of the toll that plant closures exact from American working-class families. The central character of Joe Magarack (Dan Chumley) is bone-weary after a life in the steel mill, but believes he must slave overtime without complaint to save the plant. His wife Annabelle (Sharon Lockwood) is fed up with the mill's demands, and invents outlandish schemes to get her husband retired—or, if necessary, fired. Down the street their Chicano neighbors Louie (Eduardo Robledo) and Linda (Wilma Bonet) are struggling with their own problems. Louie

is ending. In several big, bouncy, '40s-style production numbers, the talented cast (comprised of Chumley, Lockwood, Robledo, Bonet, Audrey Smith and Gus Johnson) jitterbug and hoof, sing Andrews Sisters-type ditties and syncopated strike chants and forcefully enact the roles of young, idealistic steelworkers with visions of post-War prosperity dancing in their heads.

The style is as glib and presentational as a Broadway musical, but the content is provocative, especially when a labor organizer named Rudy injects a cautionary note as he attempts to keep his newly compliant union from making too many concessions to the bosses and selling out cheap.

Steeltown ends with a happy wedding (for the young Joe and Annabelle Magarack) and on an ironically upbeat note: "Everything's great in *Steeltown*," sings the company in a Brechtian song composed by Bruce Barthol. "We're all part of the American team/ And we're gonna be living the American dream." The final scene is a dazzling display of apple-pie American confidence, but the audience knows all too well from the downcast first act how that dream has soured.

Like most Mime Troupe shows, *Steeltown* invites controversy and argument. Some audience members have asked whether its critique of union activity masks a disturbing form of anti-unionism.

"If you consider topics of groups sacrosanct you'll never say anything," answers Joan Holden. "I would expect union officials of a certain type to dislike this play and say it's anti-labor. But the rank-and-file unionists we've performed it for like it. The play looks for change to come out of a new, revitalized-from-the-bottom labor movement. That's why we want to perform it for labor groups as well as general theater audiences."

With *Steeltown* underway, the San Francisco Mime Troupe faces its next 25 years with new vigor. They're planning a kind of "living newspaper" cabaret show for the San Francisco parks this summer—if they can get a permit during July's Democratic presidential convention. (The city is making public assembly almost impossible during the convention.) The company is also planning dates for its fall tour and still trying to find venues in the Midwest, an area they've had little success in booking since the early '70s, when the left stopped

controlling the student entertainment budgets on college campuses. Most of the Mime Troupe veterans are in their 30s and 40s now, and their earlier youthful fantasies of being the theatrical vanguard of a new American revolution have faded. Their belief in theater as a force for social change is, however, still very much alive.

"There is a kind of rudder, a kind of hope that the Mime Troupe's continuing existence provides for people," says Dan Chumley. Joan Holden adds, "At my worst moments I think it's enough already. But I haven't noticed a drop-off in the demand for what we do. On the contrary, it's obviously the kind of theater that gives people something."

That "something" is what any good theater can give—drama, laughter, music, pleasure—and perhaps something else: encouragement to keep fighting for a more just and equitable society against all the odds. If that's cheerleading, then the Mime Troupe is leading some pretty entertaining, thoughtful cheers—and audiences around the world are grateful to have them keep on doing it.

Misha Berson frequently contributes theater reviews and articles to the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, the *San Francisco Chronicle-Examiner* and other publications. She is executive director of the Theatre Communications Center of the Bay Area.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe will perform *Steeltown* in California cities through May 17. They will tour the Midwest and East Coast in the fall and are available for bookings. For information, contact the San Francisco Mime Troupe, 855 Treat St., San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 285-1717.

Africa

Continued from page 9

oured" and "Asian" South Africans the vote in August, but which leaves 22 million blacks unenfranchised—will quiet demands for change. At the same time, increasing guerrilla activity has made factory, office and home security one of South Africa's fastest-growing industries. Last year some 55 explosions were reported in the heavily censored press, including bombs at oil depots and power stations as well as in police offices and the Pretoria defense headquarters.

So Pretoria, like its neighbors, has been under pressure to limit its over-extension into Angola and to tighten internal security. With U.S. assistance, it may have partially achieved both goals in the recent round of talks. Whatever happens with Namibian independence, South Africa can now pull out of Angola and demand Angolan aid in controlling the border. And if Mozambique really cracks down on ANC guerrillas, South Africans who support apartheid can feel a little more secure at home than they have at any time since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 eliminated the buffer zone of colonial states which once protected South Africa—but only a little more secure, as an exploding South African oil depot last week illuminated.

Gun-running, as the Mozambican government itself complained last year, is notoriously difficult to control, especially in countries with undeveloped infrastructures and vast sparsely settled areas. No matter how hard the Mozambique, Zimbabwe or Botswana governments try to block them, it seems a safe bet that ANC guerrillas and arms will find their way south from their training camps in Angola and their headquarters in Lusaka, into South Africa itself.

More important, it seems probable that the ANC has already planned for just such an eventuality as an imposed *pax Pretoria*, by creating structures inside South Africa to carry on the guerrilla struggle. More than 2,000 trained guerrillas are already estimated to be inside South Africa, organizing, planning and carrying out guerrilla raids with no direct contact with the ANC's exiled leadership. The ANC claims all military actions are now directed from inside the country, and testimony at trials of captured guerrillas suggests there are already arms caches hidden throughout South Africa's black townships. Rather than tightening its security, Pretoria may have inadvertently moved the military front to inside its own borders—which is, after all, where the cycle of violence about which Machel complained really began.

The ANC has always emphasized political mobilization, regarding violence as a minor tactic in a broader strategy; the recent round of talks will have no effect on the increasingly organized political opposition to apartheid inside South Africa. But it seems no more likely that guerrilla activity will come to a halt because of the Mozambique-South Africa pact than that an independent Namibia will come out of the Angola-South Africa agreement. As the ANC's Tambo concluded, "Peace has not yet broken out" in southern Africa.

Gay Seidman returned from southern Africa in December. She is a member of the editorial collective of *Socialist Review*.

Film

Continued from page 13

similar theme, making comparisons and contrasts after them. During the week of a recent children's festival, the Disney *Cinderella*, *E.T.* and the first Elpidio Valdes feature were presented as three approaches to children's programs.

Cuban features, which automatically get a two-week extendable run, are usually box office hits, with some exceptions and the occasional runaway success, like *Portrait of Teresa*. People remember the

feature films since in Cuba, as seems true almost everywhere, "the movies" means "fiction." Most people I talked to could remember only one or two documentaries—especially a sports spectacular like *Algo Mas que una Medalla (Something More than a Medal)*—while they were quick to recall such dramas as *Portrait of Teresa*. Also popular among fiction features, however, were such "difficult" experiments in new cinematic language as *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *One Way or Another*.

Yet the film that was the apple of ICAIC's eye for several years was one the public detested. *Cecilia* was supposed to be the Cuban epic movie of the Cuban classic 19th-century romance, *Cecilia Valdes*. Most of the ICAIC's feature film resources for more than a year were poured into making this film. Humberto Solas, a turbulently passionate stylist, reinterpreted the novel in a romantic visual style hinting at twisted morbid motivations among the central characters. It set off a nationwide debate on the difference between the book and the film. "*Cecilia Valdes* is a national myth," signs Manuel Pereira. "Humberto's biggest mistake was calling the film *Cecilia*. If only he'd called it—oh, *Josefina*—it could have been judged on its merits."

Cubans may measure their movies up against their books, but they don't measure them against Hollywood's freely-admitted attractions. "Our movies reflect our social realities; they have to," one practical-minded engineering student told me. "This is a poor country, so we have to use what's in front of us for our sets. We can't afford to go around smashing up our cars like you do—we need them."

Film production reflects social conditions as much as do the subject, style or reception of films. ICAIC has a management structure, but all executives are either directors or producers, and the desk on which the buck stops—that of the vice-minister of culture—now belongs to filmmaker Julio Garcia Espinosa.

Directors come up with ideas for a movie, whether it's a newsreel, a documentary, an animated film or a feature. Since other government branches have their own filmmaking divisions, ICAIC is free to choose its own subjects. Directors often write their own scripts too, accounting for the relatively minor role for scriptwriters in Cuban film.

At an annual production meeting within each filmmaking division, ICAIC members decide on priorities for new projects, budgets and deadlines—all of which is overseen by head of production Jorge Fraga. The filmmaking union, organized vertically to include everyone from the truckdrivers to the directors, shares in the planning and scheduling. Once a project is established, the director is responsible for bringing in the film on time and on budget. The whole cast and crew will win or lose accordingly, since their salaries are fixed to the estimated schedule.

On the *Permuta* set, veteran producer Sergio San Pedro explained how he designs a production schedule. "We all sit down together—the director, the producer, cinematographer, production designer and editor—and hash out the logic of the movie, what we want it to accomplish. Then I go away for a few days and let the different opinions percolate and come back with a production plan to discuss." Some directors use elaborate storyboards, while others, like Humberto Solas, go in with nothing more formal than a strong personal vision. Their production teams are usually composed of friends with a sympathy for the director's personal and aesthetic style.

San Pedro wants both economy and quality, and one of his rules is to film a movie as closely in sequence as possible. "It's too hard on the actors otherwise," he says. "We want to make it as easy as we can for them—I think it's inhumane to make them play very different moments in their character in the same day. Besides, it doesn't usually result in very good filmmaking."

San Pedro isn't troubled by ironclad union regulations—he was amused when a Canadian documentary crew broke promptly at 1:00 p.m. for lunch as per contract, even though lunch hadn't ar-

rived—but he is carefully watched by union reps at every stage in production. There have been times when the union took ICAIC to task, and even to court, for grievances or for not enforcing new legislation. And it has sometimes called special meetings when productions have become delayed or otherwise expensive. But by and large, says union rep (and documentary filmmaker) Rebeca Chavez, "We have a friendly relationship. It's based on the fact that everyone, more than anything else, wants to keep on making movies."

Yet Cuban filmmakers are beginning to chafe under the endless rounds of improvisation imposed by isolation and poverty. There is a chronic shortage of film stock—something that makes documentarists uninterested in 16mm technology and *cinema verite* style, since they can't afford the shooting ratio. Juan Padron notes that his latest feature was the product of only two animators and one painter—the barest possible crew. And in the documentary division, Santiago Alvarez is back to clipping old magazines since the last video news service ICAIC received, Visnews, got cancelled.

This new phase brings new challenges and perhaps some modifications in the workshop approach. There is talk, for example, of finally setting up a film school that would replace the existing apprenticeship system, where aspiring filmmakers go to work first in the newsreel division, then make short documentaries and, if selected by management, move upward into feature work. Increasingly authors are being encouraged to write scripts before finding a director interested in them, in order to create a pool of available projects as production heats up.

Some film work is being done with a closer eye for the market. Last year half of ICAIC's new documentaries had a musical subject, in an attempt to help generate foreign exchange with sure-fire sellers. Co-productions are also on the rise, among others with France, Spain and Venezuela. *Alsino and the Condor*, an Oscar nominee last year, was a Cuban co-production with Nicaragua, Mexico and Costa Rica. These co-productions extend and sometimes formalize a long-standing custom in ICAIC of allowing other Latin American filmmakers—often prohibited from making films in their own countries for political or economic reasons—to finish their films in Cuba's facilities.

As Cuban film grows in complexity, so does the movement in which it plays a leading role: the "New Latin American Cinema," independent and often socially-critical film from different Latin American cultures and countries. Although New Latin American Cinema began when ICAIC was just a dream of some young Havana film buffs, the existence of a Cuban film industry has made a big difference to its survival, especially in recent years.

In 25 years, Cuban cinema has developed from a handful of eager amateurs making slapdash newsreels to a national industry and an international pacesetter in cinematic style. It has all been unlikely—or, as Julio Garcia Espinosa admits, "On the face of it, it might seem like a luxury for a poor country to develop its own cinema." But Santiago Alvarez, with typical emphatic gestures, explains, "We have an urgent battle to wage against underdevelopment, to provide not just meals but culture for everyone."

A different version of this article first appeared in *American Film*.

Heyday

Continued from page 18

when those written records simply do not exist. The obvious next step would be to check the recollections of more than one individual. But Klehr has conducted relatively few of his own interviews, relying instead on those Draper conducted in the '50s. One of the few people Klehr did interview was Sam Darcy, an important Communist leader in California in the early '30s, and in Minnesota and Pennsyl-

vania later on. Mention of Darcy often elicits a strong response from CP veterans: he has fervent admirers and equally fervent detractors. Darcy was closely allied with William Z. Foster in a decade-long factional battle with CP leader Earl Browder. (Browder would finally have Darcy expelled in 1944.)

In 1934 Upton Sinclair, a long-time socialist, sought nomination for governor in California's Democratic primary. To almost everyone's surprise, he won. In the general election that fall the Communists ran Darcy against Sinclair, whom they denounced as a "social fascist." It was not the CP's most glorious moment. Klehr writes that Darcy opposed this strategy, only to be overruled by Browder. But the only source cited for this is an interview with Sam Darcy.

In 1938 Darcy is credited with challenging the CP's tactics within the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party. Darcy was "angry that Browder planned 'to transform the Communist Party into a semi-secret society for conniving in other organizations instead of an independent mass party of its own.'" The sole source cited: Darcy.

His recollections may be accurate, but Klehr has violated his own guidelines for the "prudent researcher." Klehr uncritically accepts Darcy's version because it doesn't detract from his own interpretation, because it has a nice "insider" ring to it and because this is not a subject Klehr has much of a feel for. Draper had been a Communist in the '30s. He knew the world he was describing.

While *The Heyday of American Communism* remains a valuable source for the who, what, where and when questions, for the how and why, we'll have to look elsewhere.

Maurice Isserman teaches history at Smith College. His book *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War* will be reissued by Wesleyan University Press this year.

CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Kirby Mittelmeyer**.

CHICAGO, IL

April 8

Chicago DSA meeting will feature *The Last Pullman Car*, a film about the closing of Chicago's Pullman plant given three stars by the *Reader and Chicago Tribune*. "A powerful and revelatory film" (Studs Terkel). At St. Nicolai's Church, 3000 N. Kedzie, 7:00 p.m. \$3 donation requested. Childcare. Refreshments will follow.

BOSTON, MA

April 14

"Turning the Tide: Strategies for Defeating Reaganism." An activist conference with Barbara Ehrenreich, Frances Fox Piven, Stanley Aronowitz, Ruth Messinger, Ray Bonner, former *New York Times* correspondent in El Salvador. Emerson Hall, Harvard University. 9:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Cost: \$5.00 in advance, \$7.00 at door. Mail registration to DSA Youth Section, c/o Tom Canel, 28 Lowell St., Apt. 1R, Somerville, MA 02143. Phone (617) 666-3921.

LEXINGTON, KY

April 20, 21 & 22

American Atheists, Founder, Dr. Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Director, Mr. Jon Murray, will hold their 14th annual convention in Lexington, Ky., Radisson Plaza Hotel, April 20, 21 & 22. Speakers: Dr. O'Hair, Dr. Alfred Lilienthal (editor, *Middle East Perspective*), Barbara Smoker (president, National Secular Society, England). Non-members welcome. Information: Dan Flores (512) 458-1244.

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May 25-28

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Jobs

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poration. The incentives offered are enticing: duty-free importation of equipment, raw materials and data, relatively cheap office space, full repatriation of profits and a corporate tax of 2.5 percent.

What does Barbados receive in return? "Jobs," says Chase, "and a population with more familiarity with computers. We expect to be part of [futurist Alvin] Toffler's 'Third Wave.'"

Chase says his nation's high literacy (97 percent), English language, stable politics and excellent telecommunications—"as good or better than in the U.S."—makes it a natural setting for the offshore office. He admits, though, that other Caribbean countries, with even lower labor rates, are qualified, too.

"Throughout the region, I'm not sure there is an awareness yet of the potential that the information services industry holds," he says.

Soon Barbados might face stiff competition for American office work from a less likely source: China. There, more than 300 data entry operators are employed by Pacific Data Services, headquartered in Dallas. Through an agreement with the Academy of Sciences in Beijing, PDS teaches Chinese students English and typing, then hires them to key into compu-

ters legal data ranging from court reports to volumes of statutes. Workers earn about \$7 a week and, according to the company, their rate of accuracy is 95.5 percent.

Meanwhile, American labor unions and industry analysts are eyeing warily the trend toward shifting offices overseas.

"We're concerned, and we are going to have to take a much closer look at just how many computer-type office jobs are leaving the States," says Michael Donovan, who heads up the AFL-CIO's arm in the Caribbean, the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD).

The Barbados-based Donovan says the offshore push comes after a decade-long "concerted effort to organize more white collar workers in the U.S."

Telecabbing.

In the future, employers might be able to defeat striking workers by simply electronically transferring their work elsewhere—a tactic some critics already have dubbed "telecabbing"—but, as Donovan says, "This is something new, and the problem is that no one really has studied the problem yet."

Riva Olsen, senior business representative at Office and Professional Employees Local No. 9 in San Francisco, says she is "vaguely aware" that some companies are sending clerical work out of the country. Olsen, like other local labor officials interviewed, says she doesn't perceive "an immediate threat," though her

union is focusing on a related, more pressing problem.

"Our immediate concern is that offices in San Francisco and other cities are relocating to rural areas where labor is cheaper. By moving to Chico or Redding or some similar place a company can get people willing to work for minimum wage. Their savings are considerable."

The phenomenon is hard to fight, says Olsen, because office employees are traditionally difficult to organize. "They see themselves as white collar, and identify unions with blue-collar workers only," she claims.

Any proliferation of the offshore office can't help but erode the bargaining power of the U.S. white-collar worker, says Lenny Siegel, who, as director of the Pacific Studies Center in Mountain View, Calif., watchdogs labor practices in the electronics industry. "It means there will be competitive pressure on wages and conditions. People will be told not to push for unions because if the pay goes up, the jobs will move out."

"That's what production workers already are being told," he says.

Siegel doubts that, as telecommunications improve and costs go down, much can be done to stem the outflow of labor-intensive clerical work. "Employers make the most money by dividing production into the simplest, individual tasks. Under that system," he says, "it is nearly impossible to keep those simplified jobs from moving to where wages are

lowest."

If the offshore office becomes more commonplace, labor officials say they will look to government for help. Janice Blood, spokeswoman for 9to5, a national organization of office workers, already is calling for an "official inquiry" into the impact that technology is having on clerical jobs. She proposes a federal commission composed of business and union leaders, academics and government representatives that could "assess where the situation is right now and where it is going."

"The problem," says Blood, "is that at present the decisions about how new technology will be used are in the hands of a few heads of companies. Those decisions should be arrived at more democratically."

Says Peter Cervantes-Gautschi of Silicon Valley's Santa Clara County Central Labor Council: "Obviously the flight of office work overseas is going to have to be stopped in Washington. And we have plenty of options open, ranging from a tax placed on corporations to finance retraining of laid-off workers, to duties placed on the import and export of electronic data."

"Office jobs are considered the biggest potential for growth in America's new, high-tech economy. If we can't even keep those in the country, we're headed for a major depression."

David Beers is a free-lance writer who recently returned from Barbados.

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BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS

JOBS IN MANUFACTURING ARE not the only ones moving out of the U.S. these days. The lure of cheaper labor, coupled with advances in computers and telecommunications, has spurred some companies to shift office work, such as word processing and data entry, overseas as well.

And much of it comes here, to an island that hopes to become the "offshore office" in the Caribbean.

For several years now, U.S. firms have shipped invoices, subscription forms, questionnaires and other data to Barbados, where operators who are paid less than half the U.S. rate key them into computers. Stored on magnetic disk, the information is then shipped back to the home office.

The same process occurs around the globe—an estimated 40 companies in the U.S., Australia and Japan now send their labor-intensive clerical work to operations in Ireland, India, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, even China.

One drawback that has kept this quiet trend from becoming a boom is the inconvenient time-lag built into airfreighting information back and forth. Now, however, the latest company to set up a

data entry shop in Barbados, American Airlines, is using satellite telecommunications to speed up the process. If American's expensive experiment proves successful, it may begin what some industry watchers have been dolefully predicting: a major exodus of office jobs from the U.S.

Every morning a quarter ton of used passenger ticket coupons is air-delivered to Caribbean Data Services, American's wholly owned company in Barbados. The facility looks like a transplanted chunk of Silicon Valley: equipment hums and keys click as workers sort tickets, then feed pertinent information into an array of computer terminals. That data is funneled into larger computers, then beamed via satellite immediately back to the airline's computerized accounting center in Tulsa, Okla.

CDS managing director Samuel Fuchs says that since December all American Airlines tickets, about a million a week, are processed here. "With technology where it is now, we had no reason to keep this operation in America. In fact, we had a preference to go elsewhere," he states.

The reason for that "preference" is clear: data entry operators in the U.S. earn from \$5 to \$15 per hour; Fuchs says those at CDS are paid between \$1.75 and

\$3 per hour, near the bottom of the Barbadian wage scale.

Even with transmission costs, American Airlines will reportedly save up to \$4 million a year with its remote facility.

Similar, but smaller, satellite-linked offices in Barbados have proved unprofitable in the past. Fuchs thinks AA's large investment—nearly \$3 million—and expertise will make the difference this time. He says, "An advantageous labor rate is not enough. At this level of technical sophistication you need sophisticated management as well."

Fuchs, an American, predicts that his payroll of 200 Barbadians, most of whom are women, will expand to more than 400 by year's end.

"We are at the forefront of testing just how efficient this [offshore office] concept can be. We could be pioneering a major trend," he says.

Hard-sell strategy.

Fuch's confident vision seems to be shared by the Barbados government. A "serious, hard-sell strategy" has been developed to attract more U.S. clerical work to the island, according to Rawle Chase, general manager of the state-financed Barbados Industrial Development Cor-

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